



**LEFT-HANDERS
IN HISTORY**



**LOUIS WAIN AND
HIS CURIOUS CATS**

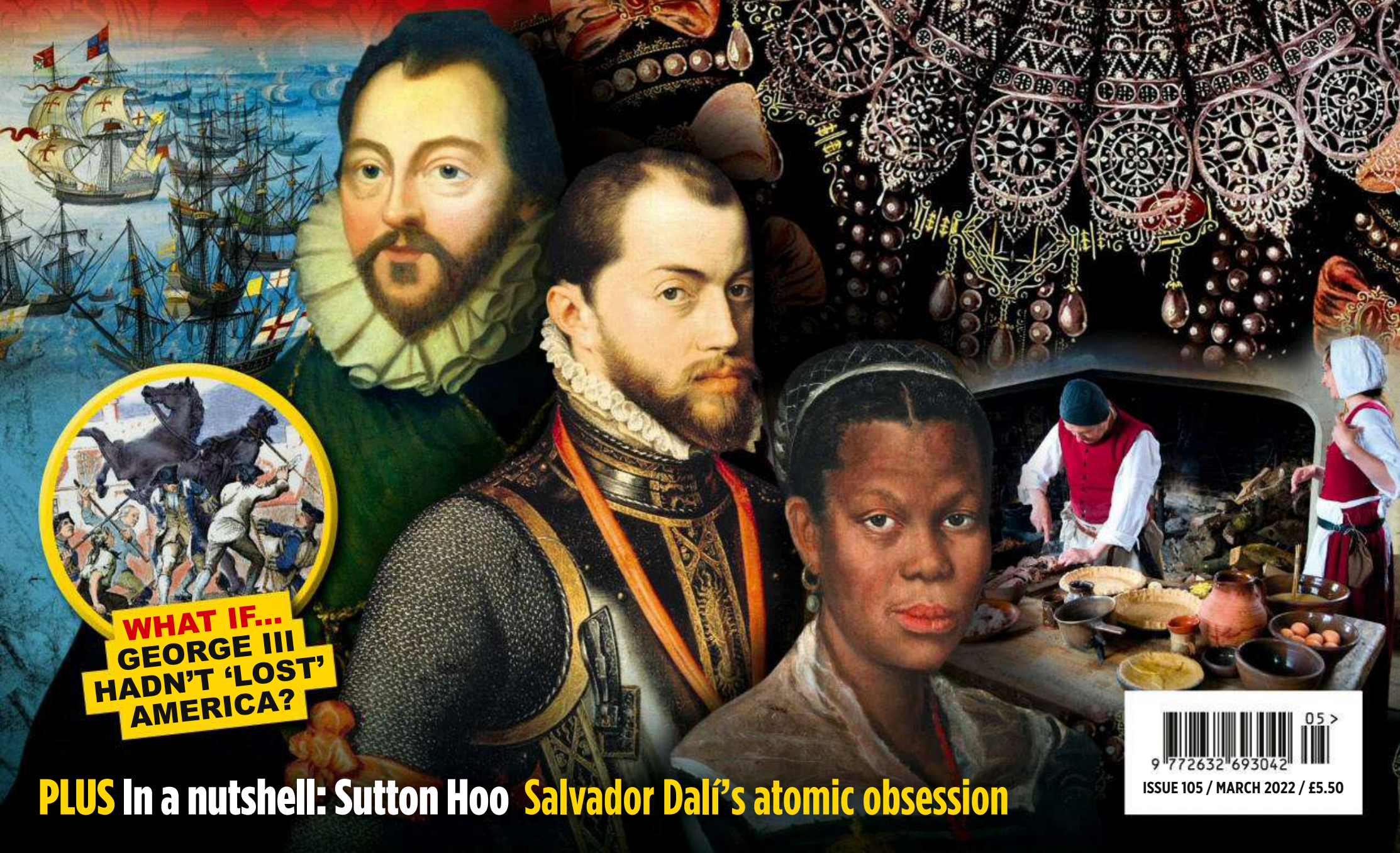


HISTORY REVEALED

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO

The Elizabethans

Experience the sights, smells and
sounds of 16th-century England



**WHAT IF...
GEORGE III
HADN'T 'LOST'
AMERICA?**

PLUS In a nutshell: Sutton Hoo **Salvador Dalí's atomic obsession**

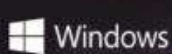


9 772632 693042 05 >
ISSUE 105 / MARCH 2022 / £5.50

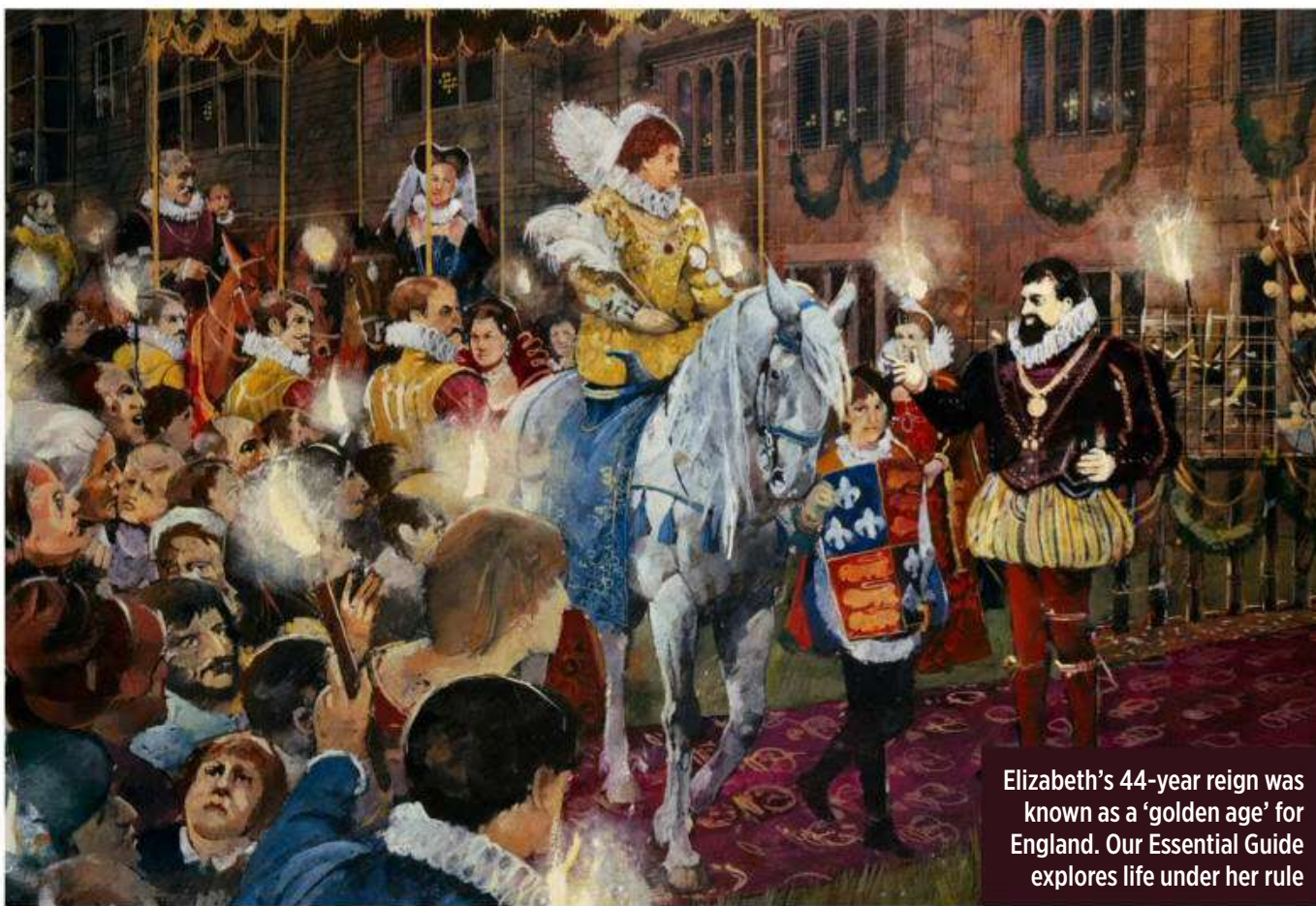
★ WAR ★ THUNDER

Experience the Battle of Britain yourself in War Thunder!

PLAY NOW FOR FREE
WARTHUNDER.COM/FLY



WELCOME MARCH 2022



Elizabeth's 44-year reign was known as a 'golden age' for England. Our Essential Guide explores life under her rule

Elizabeth I, together with her father Henry VIII, is one of the most recognisable royals in English history. From her accession to the throne in 1558 to her death 44 years later, she remained incredibly popular with her subjects and utterly devoted to her kingdom. In this month's Essential Guide, we've enlisted the help of historian Dr Nicola Tallis to **explore the reign of the famous Virgin Queen** – from the sights, smells and sounds of Elizabethan street life, to victory over the Spanish Armada, and the experiences of African people who made 16th-century England their home. Start reading from page 28.

Elsewhere, we examine the remarkable career and talent of artist Louis Wain, whose illustrations of big-eyed, anthropomorphised cats captured the hearts of many, and changed public perceptions of the household moggie (page 58).

Also this month, we **investigate some of the challenges that left-handed people have faced through history** – from medieval scribes to Victorian schoolchildren (page 66), and explore a 1951 painting by controversial Surrealist artist Salvador Dalí that demonstrates his obsession with nuclear science (page 64).

Plus, we look at the incredible discovery of the seventh-century AD royal burial ground at Sutton Hoo (page 21), revisit a daring prisoner of war escape near Bridgend, Wales, in 1945 (page 16), and ask **what might have happened had King George III not 'lost' the American colonies** (page 70).

See you next month!

Charlotte Hodgman
Editor

Charlotte



THIS MONTH'S BIG NUMBERS

200

The number of Africans believed to have lived under the reign of Queen Elizabeth I

27

The length, in metres, of the Sutton Hoo longship, the ghostly imprint of which was discovered in 1939

30,000

The approximate number of soldiers and sailors on board the Spanish Armada of 1588

GET INVOLVED

FIND US ONLINE

Visit our online home, historyextra.com, for a wealth of exciting content on British and world history, as well as an extensive archive of magazine content from *BBC History Revealed* and our sister publication *BBC History Magazine*.



HISTORY EXTRA PODCAST

Download episodes for free from iTunes and other providers, or via historyextra.com/podcast

CONTACT US



[facebook.com/HistoryExtra](https://www.facebook.com/HistoryExtra)



twitter.com/HistoryExtra



[@HistoryExtra](https://www.instagram.com/HistoryExtra)



EMAIL US: haveyoursay@historyrevealed.com



OR POST: Have Your Say, *BBC History Revealed*, Immediate Media, Eagle House, Colston Avenue, Bristol, BS1 4ST



EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES: 0117 927 9009

SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES:



PHONE: 03330 162 116



EMAIL: historyrevealed@buysubscriptions.com



POST: *BBC History Revealed*, PO Box 3320, 3 Queensbridge, Northampton, NN4 7BF



OVERSEAS: In the US/Canada you can contact us at: Immediate Media, 2900 Veterans Hwy, Bristol PA, 19007, USA
immediatemediat@buysubscriptions.com
Toll-free 855 8278 639

GET YOUR DIGITAL COPY

Digital versions of *BBC History Revealed* are available for iOS, Kindle Fire, PC and Mac. Visit iTunes, Amazon or zinio.com to find out more.

USPS Identification Statement

BBC History Revealed (ISSN 2632-6930) (USPS 022-450)
March 2022 is published 13 times a year (monthly, with a Christmas issue in December) by Immediate Media Company London Limited, Vineyard House, 44 Brook Green, Hammersmith, London, W6 7BT, UK. Distributed in the US by NPS Media Group, 2 Enterprise Drive, Suite 420, Shelton, CT 06484. Periodicals postage paid at Shelton, CT and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *BBC History Revealed*, PO Box 401, Williamsport, PA 17703, USA

CONTENTS

MARCH 2022

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO

The Elizabethans

30 The Elizabethan golden age

An overview of the pivotal moments that would come to define the Virgin Queen's life and reign

32 Everything you wanted to know about the Elizabethans

Dr Nicola Tallis answers our big questions

36 The making of the Virgin Queen

We delve into the queen's love life – or lack thereof

38 Elizabeth and her government

Who were the queen's most important advisors?

40 Elizabethan daily life

Take a trip through 16th-century England and its heady mixture of sights, sounds and smells

44 Lost Elizabethans: the Africans who lived in England

We uncover the forgotten stories of England's black Tudors

48 The Spanish Armada

A day-by-day account of how Elizabeth's greatest military victory unfolded, and its impact on Spain's fleet

50 The birth of an empire

Why England became a major player on the world stage

54 Settling the religious divide

How did Elizabeth try and reconcile the vast differences between England's Protestants and Catholics?



▲ Discover how Queen Elizabeth I built an empire and ensured that England ruled the waves

FEATURES

58 Louis Wain: creator of a "cat world"

Inside the life and career of the troubled English artist who gained fame thanks to his colourful feline caricatures

64 What Great Paintings Say

A look at Salvador Dalí's *Exploding Raphaelesque Head*

66 A history of left-handed writing

We investigate the challenges faced by 'lefties' over the centuries: from medieval scribes to Victorian schoolchildren

70 What if... George III hadn't 'lost' America?



▲ How Louis Wain changed the way we view cats

▲ The explosive secrets behind a 1951 masterpiece



40

◀ Find out what life was like for ordinary people living in Elizabethan England: from the clothes that they wore, to the foods they consumed



54

▲ Inside Elizabeth's efforts to settle religious turmoil



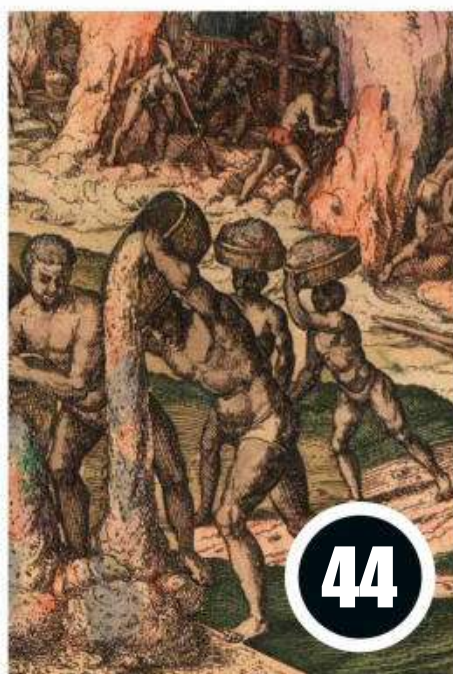
38

▲ Meet the men who served in the queen's government



32

▲ How did the Elizabethans keep themselves entertained?



44

▲ The stories of the Africans who came to live in England



66

▲ Why being left-handed was once treated as a defect that needed 'fixing'



70

▲ Could the American Revolutionary War have ended differently?

EVERY MONTH

6 Snapshots

Charlie Chaplin meets Gandhi, and more

12 What We've Learned This Month

An investigation into medieval warhorses, a badger unearths Roman coins, and more

14 My Life in History

Jon Bedford, geospatial surveyor

16 This Month in... 1945

German prisoners of war tunnel to freedom

19 Paranormal Cold Case

Danny Robins explores spooky premonitions

21 In a Nutshell

Basil Brown's discoveries at Sutton Hoo

24 Spotlight: Samuel Johnson

Inside the life of the legendary lexicographer

73 Q&A

When was the jukebox invented? This, and other historical conundrums answered

79 TV, Film & Radio

This month's history entertainment

82 What's On

Five historical experiences to try this month

84 Books & Podcasts

The latest historical releases and podcasts

86 Historical Fiction

Joanne Burn discusses her new novel, set in the village of Eyam during the Great Plague

87 Prize Crossword

88 Letters

89 Next Issue

90 Photo Finish

**LIKE IT?
SUBSCRIBE!
GET 44% OFF
SHOP PRICE**



26

ESTABLISHED 1852

J. E. AYLING & SONS

Gold Medalists

LONDON - PARIS
& MELBOURNE

OARS & SCULLS

Makers to

THE PRINCIPAL UNIVERSITIES

ROWING CLUBS & SCULLERS

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.





1947

SNAPSHOTS



WATERWAY TO GET TO WORK

Less than two years after the end of World War II, a pair of Londoners do their best to get on with their day after the River Thames bursts its banks at Putney, causing major flooding. However, the freak weather was not just confined to the capital. Throughout Britain, the first few months of 1947 were marked by near-constant snow, which caused drifts as deep as seven metres, while temperatures plunged below zero, exacerbating the problems brought on by continued coal rationing. Then, as the snow melted, rivers rose, resulting in damage to more than 100,000 homes and businesses. The situation got so bad that the people of Canada even sent food parcels.





c1870

SNAPSHOTS



CROSSING THE SEA OF ICE

Conquering the famous Mer de Glace ('Sea of Ice') in the French Alps would have been an impressive achievement for any early pioneer of alpinism, but spare a thought for these four women attempting the feat in full skirts. Although the attire can't have been too comfortable to wear while traversing tricky terrain, it did sometimes come in useful: the traveller Gertrude Bell would use her skirts as a windbreak when lighting fires on mountainsides. Female alpinists continued to reach new heights as the 19th century progressed, and in 1907, the Ladies' Alpine Club was formed – the equivalent male organisation had refused to allow women members on account of their supposed physical and moral deficiencies when it came to climbing.

GETTY IMAGES



1931

SNAPSHOTS



A MEETING OF MINDS

Sporting silver hair and shorn of his famous moustache, silent movie star Charlie Chaplin leans out of a window to greet fans in Canning Town, East London. But this was not just a promotional stunt for his new film, *City Lights* – also inside the house was Mahatma Gandhi, who was in the British capital for a conference to discuss the future of India. Gandhi didn't have a clue who Chaplin was, but nevertheless agreed to meet the actor at the home of his friend, Dr Chuni Lal Katial, on Beckton Road. The encounter would have a strong impact on Chaplin's future work, most notably his 1936 film *Modern Times* – a commentary on the negative effect that industrialisation had on people during the Great Depression.



THINGS WE LEARNED THIS MONTH...

RECENT HISTORY HEADLINES THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE

The mandible (jaw bone) of a medieval horse found in Lincolnshire. A new research project has discovered that the 'trusty steeds' ridden by knights and kings were more diminutive than once thought



MEDIEVAL WARHORSES WERE LIKE PONIES

Hollywood would have us believe that when medieval kings and warriors rode into battle, they were sat astride huge and powerful horses. However, a new research project has concluded that the animals were "surprisingly small", with many no bigger than ponies. The investigation, carried out by five English universities, found that most medieval horses stood no more than 14.2 hands (1.44 metres) in height and were likely bred for their temperament and aptitude for long-distance campaigns rather than their size. Even the tallest horse studied by the project, found buried at Trowbridge Castle in Wiltshire, was only 15 hands high – similar to the size of small modern light riding horses. In total, the researchers studied nearly 2,000 sets of equine remains from 171 archaeological sites, spanning AD 300 to 1650.



ABOVE: University of Exeter archaeologist Dr Katherine Kanne measures bones as part of the project

RIGHT: Nearly 2,000 sets of remains were studied by researchers



ANNE FRANK'S BETRAYER FOUND?

A six-year historical investigation claims to have found the identity of the person who gave up Anne Frank and her family to the Nazis. Ex-FBI agent Vince Pankoke, along with a team of researchers, asserts that details of the Franks' secret annex in Amsterdam was supplied to the Gestapo by a fellow Jewish man named Arnold van den Bergh, who may have provided the information in order to save his own family. Anne, whose private diary was first published in 1947, died in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp; her father, Otto, was the only member of the family to survive the war.

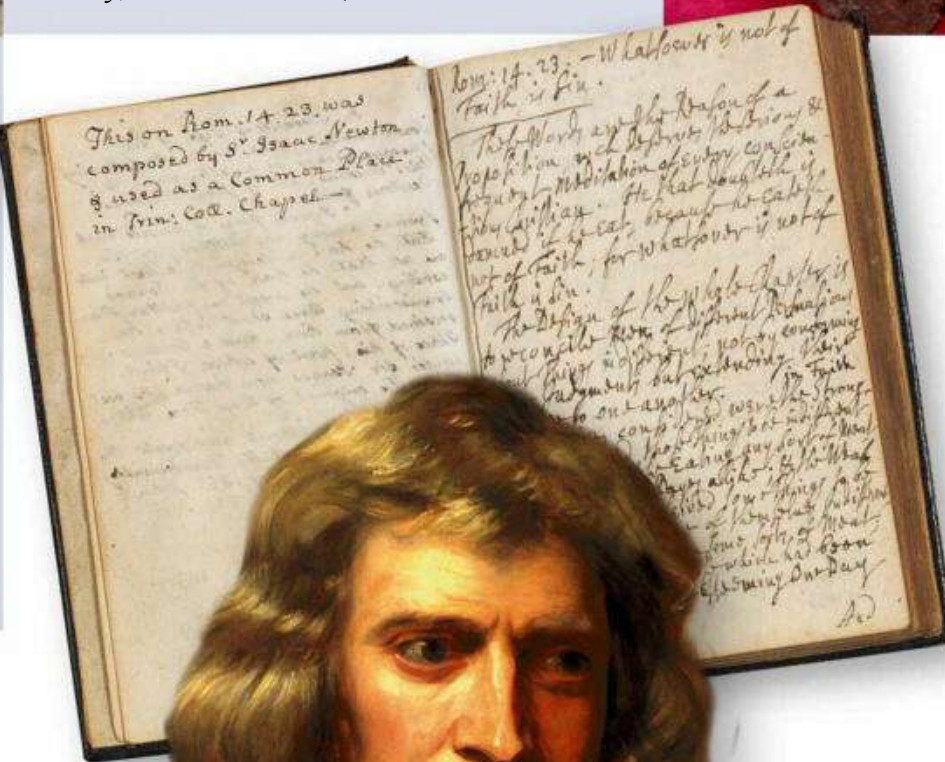


3,000

The estimated age, in years, of two Bronze Age hoards recently discovered in south Wales, including fragments of swords and socketed axes

LOST NEWTON WRITINGS UNEARTHED

A 17th-century notebook featuring lost writings by Sir Isaac Newton has been discovered by researchers. Originally owned by Newton's close friend, John Wickins, the item includes details of a religious debate in which the scientist participated, as well as transcriptions of several private letters. The significance of the notebook was first identified by Scott Mandelbrote from The Newton Project, which is dedicated to publishing all of Newton's writings online. It was purchased at an auction in 2021 and has since been added to the University of Cambridge's library collections.



BADGER MAKES AN EXPENSIVE FIND

The largest collection of Roman coins ever discovered in northern Spain has been unearthed thanks to a hungry badger. The rare artefacts, which date from the third to the fifth centuries AD, were found near the entrance to a badger's sett in Grado, Asturias, leading experts to believe they may have been dug up as the animal searched for food and abandoned after it realised they were inedible. In total, 209 individual pieces were retrieved from the woodland site, some reportedly minted as far away as Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul, Turkey) and Thessaloniki, Greece.



1921 CENSUS GOES ONLINE

The 1921 census of England and Wales has been made available to the public for the first time.

Published on genealogy website findmypast.co.uk, the vast record set contains the personal details of nearly 38 million people, giving researchers an in-depth picture of British life in the aftermath of World War I. The census return pictured above lists the fantasy writer JRR Tolkien, who is recorded living with his wife and young children in Leeds.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Please read the Instructions and Examples shown on the back, and then fill up the Census return and the List.

PERSONAL PARTICULARS				EDUCATION AND OCCUPATION				MARRIAGE AND CIVIL STATUS				MILITARY SERVICE				REMARKS			
NAME	AGE	SEX	RELATION	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	MARRIAGE	CIVIL STATUS	MILITARY SERVICE	REMARKS	NAME	AGE	SEX	RELATION	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	MARRIAGE	CIVIL STATUS	MILITARY SERVICE	REMARKS
John Ronald Reuel Tolkien	38	M	Head	University of Oxford	Professor of English Language and Literature	Married	Single												
Edith Mary Tolkien	32	F	Wife	University of Oxford	Professor of English Language and Literature	Married	Single												
John Edward Reuel Tolkien	3	M	Son	Primary School	Student	Married	Single												
Michael Hilary Reuel Tolkien	7	M	Son	Primary School	Student	Married	Single												
Priscilla Anne Reuel Tolkien	5	F	Daughter	Primary School	Student	Married	Single												
Christopher John Reuel Tolkien	2	M	Son	Primary School	Student	Married	Single												

“You don’t need to be a highly trained specialist to enjoy the benefits of some of the techniques we use: all that’s required is a camera and some free software”

Jon working at the 12th-century Lanercost Priory in Cumbria, which was once home to an Augustinian order



ABOVE: Geospatial surveying techniques can create impressive 3D models, such as this example showing the Gothic Revival church at Studley Royal Park in North Yorkshire

LEFT: Another model shows the ruins of Helmsley Castle, also located in North Yorkshire

Geospatial imaging analyst at Historic England

Jon Bedford

WHAT IS GEOSPATIAL SURVEYING AND HOW IS IT USED WITHIN THE HERITAGE SECTOR?

Geospatial refers to the relative position of things on the Earth's surface, so a geospatial surveyor captures detailed records of sites, buildings and structures to create highly accurate and detailed 3D models, plans, sections, and other survey products. These are then used for record purposes or by other specialists, such as engineers and conservators.

Our work at Historic England has many uses, including providing data from which our engineering teams can determine the stability of a building or other structure; producing scaled images to inform a stone replacement or other repair schedule; or making more traditional plans presented as line drawings. We also make digital 3D models that can be presented online to allow other conservation professionals involved in a project and the public to visualise an object or place and virtually move around it.

HOW DID YOU BECOME A GEOSPATIAL SURVEYOR AT HISTORIC ENGLAND?

My career started in commercial archaeology, where I worked for about 12 years before moving to the metric survey team at English Heritage, and subsequently the geospatial survey team with Historic England. Since then, I've surveyed hundreds of monuments, buildings, areas and objects for a wide variety of clients and project requirements: the benefit of the breadth of that experience was what led me to the role.

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE ENTAIL?

We use geospatial survey techniques to record, illustrate and digitally document historic objects, structures, places and landscapes. We have a range of skills and expertise in how best to use digital cameras (either hand held or on a drone), theodolites [an instrument used to measure horizontal and vertical angles] and 3D laser scanners to gather accurate survey data on site. We then process this data using specialist software and graphics packages to form engaging and innovative products. These can be used to inspire others to explore and analyse heritage with new eyes. We're part of a broader technical



conservation team at Historic England, which has specialists in a number of areas outside my field of expertise. It's the combination of data, analysis and interpretation from everyone that helps us ensure that our products are suitable for the needs of any project.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES THAT YOU FACE IN YOUR ROLE?

One of the bigger challenges is that no two jobs are the same, so although we have standardised methods and procedures for some elements of the work there's always a certain amount of inventiveness required to make sure we get as complete a record as we can. This is nearly always one of the more enjoyable challenges. Additionally, the geospatial survey sector is very dynamic, with new methods, equipment and software emerging all the time. We have to keep a close eye on new developments to make sure that we're staying current and performing our work as efficiently and safely as we can. With a small team, even relatively minor efficiency savings in different parts of our workflows can cumulatively have huge benefits.

HAS THERE BEEN A PROJECT YOU WOULD CONSIDER YOUR FAVOURITE?

I couldn't pick any single project as a favourite; there have been so many good ones over the years. The joy of the work lies in the variety of projects that we undertake and the places we get to visit. We're a small team with a national remit,

so all members will normally be involved in one aspect of a project or another. The fieldwork element of the job is hugely enjoyable, and we are usually, where safety allows, given access to all areas to ensure we can measure as complete a survey as we can.

To give a flavour of the variety, over the last few months we've made 3D models of objects from the English Heritage collections at Lullingstone Roman Villa and the tombs at Lanercost Priory; undertaken condition surveys at Thornton Abbey gatehouse, Pendennis Castle and some ceramics kilns in Stoke on Trent; and we've worked in support of our colleagues in the archaeological projects team during excavations at Richborough Roman amphitheatre.

HOW CAN SOMEONE GET INVOLVED IN GEOSPATIAL SURVEYING?

There are several potential routes, one of which is apprenticeships. Earlier this year, I'm proud to say that Historic England's first geospatial apprentice gained a distinction. Other routes include degree courses and professional survey qualifications, which while they are excellent introductions to the broad subject of geospatial survey do not typically focus on the specific requirements for surveying cultural heritage.

That said, you don't need to be a highly trained specialist to enjoy the benefits of some of the techniques we use. The recent emergence of photogrammetry [extracting 3D information from photographs] as a recording tool available to everyone (rather than a few well funded survey companies), has been a great boon for us in involving members of the public in recording projects. All that's required is a camera and some free software; plenty of online guidance is available, and I'd encourage anyone with an interest to have a go. Making your first 3D model is a very satisfying experience! 📍

JON BEDFORD is the geospatial survey team leader at Historic England, where he has worked since 2003. Historic England is a public body that cares for England's historic environment by listing buildings, scheduling ancient monuments and advising government: historicengland.org.uk

German PoWs escape from Island Farm

Words: Emma Slattery Williams



LEFT: The abandoned remains of Island Farm, also known as Camp 198, during the 1970s

BELOW: The arrival of German PoWs on British soil caused both apprehension and curiosity among the civilian population



“This is the BBC Home Service. Here is the midnight news for today, Sunday 11 March. Seventy Germans escaped from a prisoner of war camp at Bridgend, Glamorgan, last night.”

These are the words that first alerted the public to the largest escape by German captives in Britain during World War II. Dozens of soldiers had managed to tunnel under the perimeter fence of a prisoner of war (PoW) camp in the south Wales valleys, and by the time the bulletin had gone out, only 23 had been recaptured a fact that probably wasn't too comforting for those living nearby. But how did the incident unfold in the first place? And what were the consequences?

THE ENEMY WITHIN

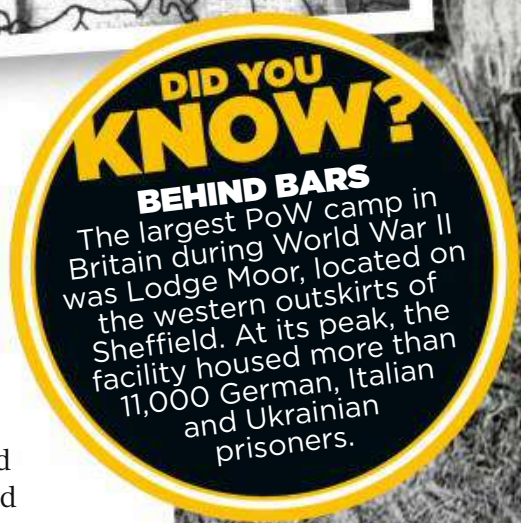
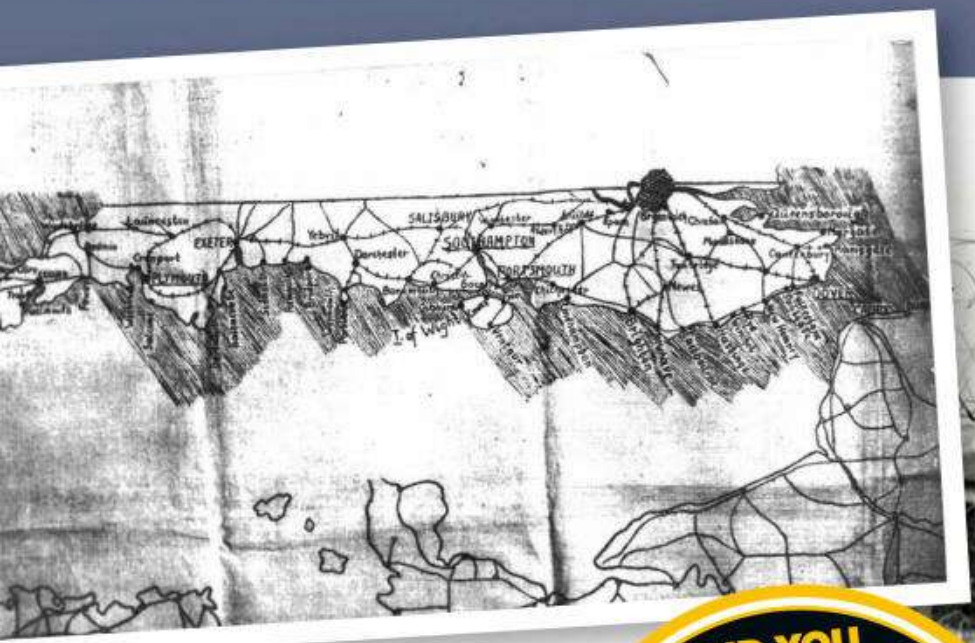
Originally known as Island Farm, the camp had been built in 1938 to house female workers for the nearby Royal Ordnance Factory – the largest of Britain's munitions works at that time. However, the employees soon realised that they would rather take the bus from their homes to the factory each day, rather than live away from their families. The site then lay dormant before becoming a barracks for US soldiers ahead of the 1944 Normandy landings, with even General Dwight D Eisenhower himself said to have paid a visit to the men stationed there.

As the Allies pushed into Nazi-occupied Europe after D-Day, there was a sharp increase in the number of Axis

soldiers being captured, and more

camps were required to hold them. As a result, Island Farm was converted into a new facility to house PoWs, becoming one of the hundreds of such camps to be established in Britain during World War II. Some camps consisted of hastily erected Nissen huts on open land, while others were based in abandoned factories and country estates.

At its peak, Camp 198 (as it officially became known) housed more than 1,600 prisoners, and concerns of escape attempts were raised by worried locals even before any attempts had been made; the thought of enemy troops running riot in the Welsh countryside,



and within short distance of a major ordnance factory, didn't bear thinking about. Unfortunately for the authorities, there had been no way to keep the camp's new purpose a secret – as soon as the first internees stepped off the train at Bridgend railway station, huge crowds had gathered to gawp at them.

The locals' fears were not unfounded: some of the prisoners began plotting their bid for freedom from the moment they arrived at Camp 198. Much like the Allied troops behind the famous 'Great Escape' from Stalag Luft III in March 1944, the Germans planned to dig a tunnel leading from their accommodation blocks to the other side of the perimeter fence. Those with prior mining experience were quickly set to work, and the plan swung into action.

CHOIRS AND CURRY POWDER

In January 1945, the entrance to an unfinished tunnel was uncovered by one of the camp's commandants, located inside Hut 16. Although the Allies concluded that this was a diversionary tunnel rather than the true escape route, they failed to find any others.

In fact, the 'real' tunnel was cleverly concealed beneath a bed inside Hut 9. Around 30 feet (9.1 metres) in length, its construction had been no mean feat: the local landscape was composed of heavy clay soil, meaning everything from tin cans to cutlery had to be used as part of the digging efforts. To hide the evidence, the men would stow the handfuls of excavated soil in their kit bags, before depositing it in one of the camp's garden plots, or within a secret hole they had created behind a false wall. And, somewhat conveniently, the sound of tunnelling activity was drowned out by the camp's very own choir, which rehearsed nearby.



ABOVE RIGHT: The exit to the Hut 9 escape tunnel being examined shortly after its discovery

ABOVE LEFT: A crude map of southern England, drawn on an escapee's shirt. The prisoners had to resort to creative navigational techniques once they reached the other side of the fence

The resulting tunnel was surprisingly hi tech. The men had managed to connect a set of electric lamps to the camp's main power supply, which not only helped illuminate the passageway, but also functioned as a warning light system that could be triggered if guards were seen approaching. Pieces of wood from bunk beds were refashioned into structural supports, while condensed milk cans were used to build a ventilation tube, which was pumped with air by a hand operated fan. And if that wasn't enough, on the night of the escape, curry

the tunnel, they would be practically invisible under cover of darkness.

PRISON BREAK

At around 10pm on Saturday 10 March, aided by some of their fellow captives who were staging a loud theatre performance nearby, the first of the escapees made their way through the tunnel and slipped into the moonless night.

Four of the men had already earmarked a local doctor's car as an escape vehicle and set about unlocking it. But to their horror, they found that the engine would not start, and to make matters worse, they had attracted the attention of several camp guards who were wandering through the town. The game was up – or was it? Fortunately for the fugitives, the guards failed to twig that the men were escaping Germans, and even gave them a 'push start' to get the car going. The fugitives then drove off into the distance, eventually boarding a train when the vehicle ran out of petrol. Soon they had made it to Solihull near Birmingham, 110 miles from Bridgend.

During the early hours of Sunday 11 March, as the final group of escapees exited the tunnel, they were spotted by the camp guards. Shots were fired, and in the frantic moments that followed,

“The sound of tunnelling activity was drowned out by the camp's very own choir, which rehearsed nearby”

powder was sprinkled near the perimeter fence to throw the camp guard dogs off the scent.

But the escapees were also aided by aspects of the camp's makeshift design. Island Farm lacked both sentry towers and adequate lighting around its perimeter fence, meaning that once prisoners had made it through

THIS MONTH... 1945

ANNIVERSARIES THAT HAVE MADE HISTORY

◀ further prisoners were discovered hiding in nearby bushes. Initially, the camp commandants thought that all of the escapees were accounted for, but the relief dissipated when a nearby police station reported that they had two Germans in custody.

So began one of the largest manhunts in UK history, with alerts put out across Wales and the rest of mainland Britain. As well as soldiers, policemen and members of the Home Guard, hundreds of civilians volunteered to take part in the search efforts. Most of the escapees were discovered within a couple of days, but two would elude the authorities for nearly a week. After fleeing the camp, the duo had stowed away in the back of lorry with the intention of escaping to the continent on a boat from Southampton, before eventually being apprehended. By Saturday 17 March, all the escapees had been recovered, with most offering little resistance once caught.

There has been a suggestion that 84 men, rather than the official figure of 70, actually managed to get out of Camp 198 that night. This theory stems from the

fact that 14 men were captured almost immediately, enabling the authorities to omit them from the total perhaps to spare them any further embarrassment. Similarly, it has also been claimed that a number of the fugitives were never actually found (a trio of escapees were apparently later sighted in Canterbury), a rumour that again, may have been buried for propaganda purposes.

Once the dust had settled, Island Farm was emptied of prisoners, who were transported to other camps around Britain. The site was later used to imprison some of the most high profile Nazis awaiting trial at Nuremberg after the war, including Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, who had played a vital role in the 1940 invasion of France.

Today, Hut 9 and its escape tunnel are all that remains of Camp 198. The hut is now home to a colony of bats rather than PoWs, but German graffiti is still visible on the walls – a small reminder of an incident that has now largely faded from living memory. 📍



EVERY MONTH THROUGHOUT 2022, WE'LL BE COMMEMORATING THE BBC'S 100TH BIRTHDAY WITH A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE...



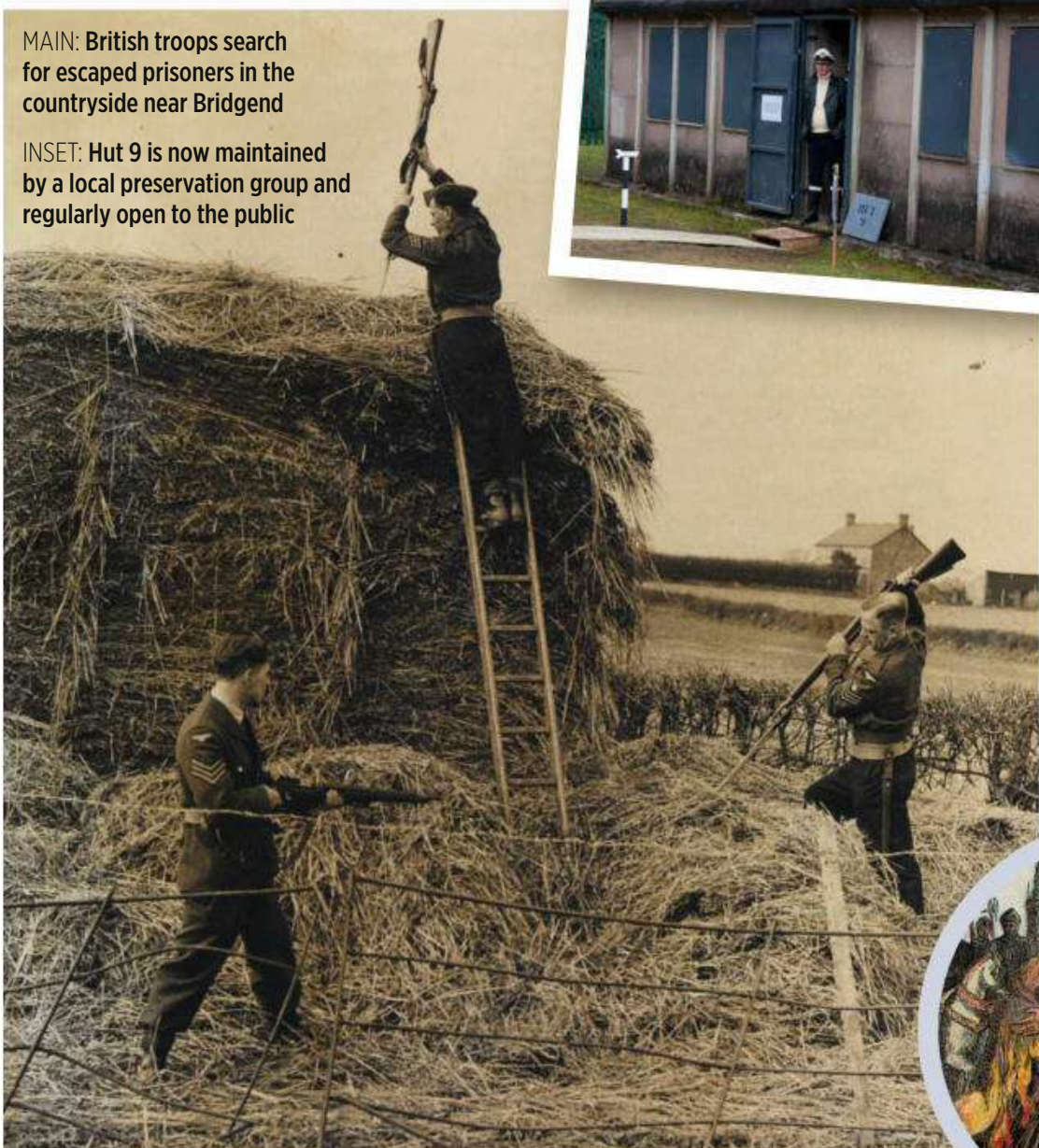
26 March 1960

THE GRAND NATIONAL IS TELEVISED FOR THE FIRST TIME

One of the most important events in the British horse racing calendar, the Grand National, is broadcast live to millions of viewers on the BBC. Merryman II's victory in the steeplechase is captured by 16 different cameras, including one perched on top of a van (known as the 'Roving Eye') that drives alongside the runners and riders.

MAIN: British troops search for escaped prisoners in the countryside near Bridgend

INSET: Hut 9 is now maintained by a local preservation group and regularly open to the public



OTHER ANNIVERSARIES

A LOOK BACK AT OTHER EVENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN MARCH THROUGHOUT HISTORY

11 March 1818

FRANKENSTEIN IS UNLEASHED

Mary Shelley's groundbreaking novel, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, is published anonymously in London. The book, telling the story of a scientist who builds a creature out of dismembered corpses, will go on to inspire countless other works of Gothic literature and come to be regarded as an early example of science fiction.



21 March 1556

THOMAS CRANMER MEETS HIS END

As a key figure in England's Protestant Reformation and a key supporter of Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer finds himself in peril when the Catholic Mary I comes to power. Having supported Lady Jane Grey's bid for the throne, he is found guilty of treason and burned at the stake.

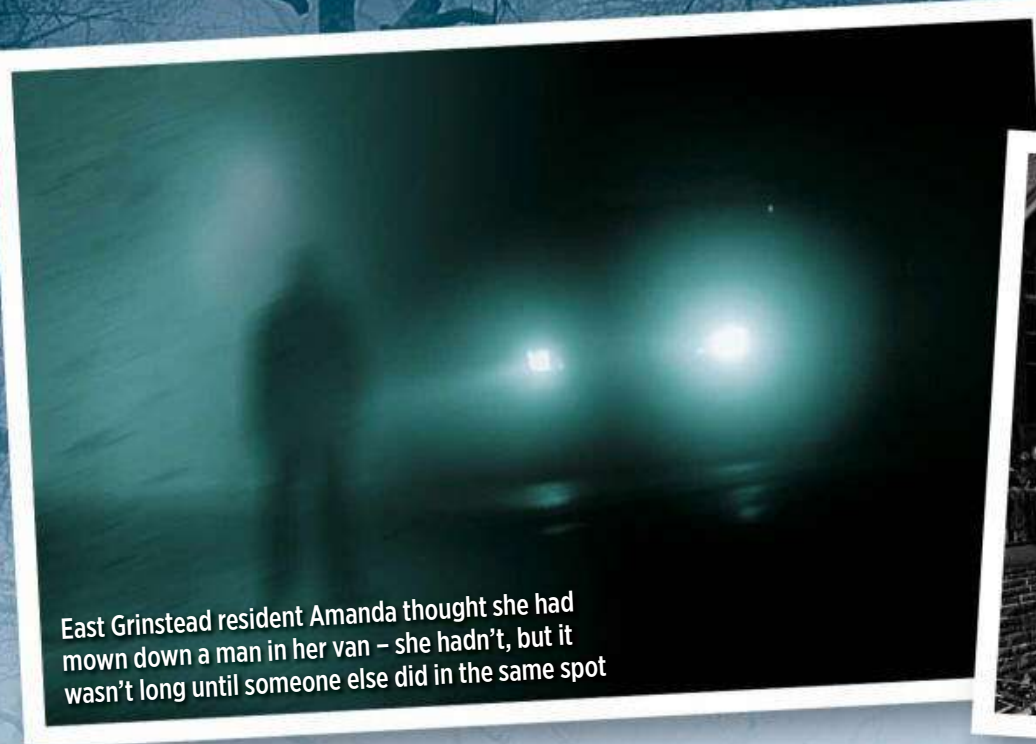


PARANORMAL COLD CASE

INVESTIGATING HISTORY'S MOST SPINE-CHILLING ENCOUNTERS



BBC Radio's **Danny Robins** speaks to a former delivery driver who had a shocking premonition – that ultimately became true just two days later



East Grinstead resident Amanda thought she had mown down a man in her van – she hadn't, but it wasn't long until someone else did in the same spot

Volunteers search for survivors in the wake of the Aberfan disaster, 1966. Some people claimed to have foreseen the tragedy, leading one psychiatrist to see whether premonitions had any scientific basis



It's the early hours of the morning on 6 December 2001, dark, cold and wintry, as Amanda drives down Railway Approach in East Grinstead, a small commuter town in West Sussex. She's in her late twenties, a delivery driver, dropping off free newspapers, and her shift is finally over. It's too late for the night owls and too early for the early birds, so there's not a single soul around as she drives her white transit van down this street she knows so well, the road she lives on.

And then, something happens that will change Amanda's life forever. There is a sudden impact. "I'd hit a man, head on." He goes up onto the bonnet of her van and she is carrying him down the street. "A panic engulfs me, as, in that split second, my life has changed beyond comprehension, because I'd surely killed him."

Except, she hasn't, because, as she looks at the road, she sees it is entirely empty. There is no one there, and yet she still feels all of the remorse and guilt she would have felt if she'd really hit someone. "It was just the oddest of sensations." Baffled and shaken, she goes into her house and files it away as an odd, inexplicable experience, but... things are about to get much odder.

Two days later, she opens her front door on Saturday morning to be confronted by the sight of blue flashing lights. The street is full of police! Amanda asks the officer on her doorstep what's happened, and the officer tells her that there has been a fatal collision. She points to the spot where it happened. To Amanda's shock and horror, it is the exact same spot where she had her vision of hitting someone 48 hours earlier.

"I went a little bit white and closed the door," says Amanda. "It was just too, too weird." It will get weirder still as she learns the nature of the real life incident. Reports emerge that the driver deliberately struck the young man after an argument, carrying him down the street, just as Amanda had imagined she was doing, and the vehicle was a white van, just like hers!

Sadly, the young man did die, and the driver was convicted of manslaughter. Amanda shows me links to press reports of his trial. One of the witnesses talks about seeing the victim on the van's bonnet, precisely as Amanda described! So, what is going on here? Did Amanda really have some kind of premonition of this incident?

I ask Chris French, a psychologist and sceptic from Goldsmiths, University of

London, if he thinks premonitions are possible. He's doubtful, but he tells me about the British Premonitions Bureau founded by a psychiatrist called John Barker in the wake of the Aberfan disaster. Aberfan is a village in South Wales where, in 1966, a terrible tragedy occurred when a huge pile of waste from the local coal mine slid down a hill and landed on a school, claiming 144 lives. Many people claimed to have had premonitions of the disaster and Barker decided to invite volunteers to send him their premonitions of future events to explore whether this was a way of avoiding other such tragedies.

Chris says the most accurate one, rather chillingly, was when one of Barker's helpers predicted Barker's own untimely death. He did indeed die, just one year later, aged 44. 

DANNY ROBINS is a writer, broadcaster and journalist. He is the presenter of the BBC Radio 4 podcasts *The Battersea Poltergeist* and *Uncanny*, available now on BBC Sounds

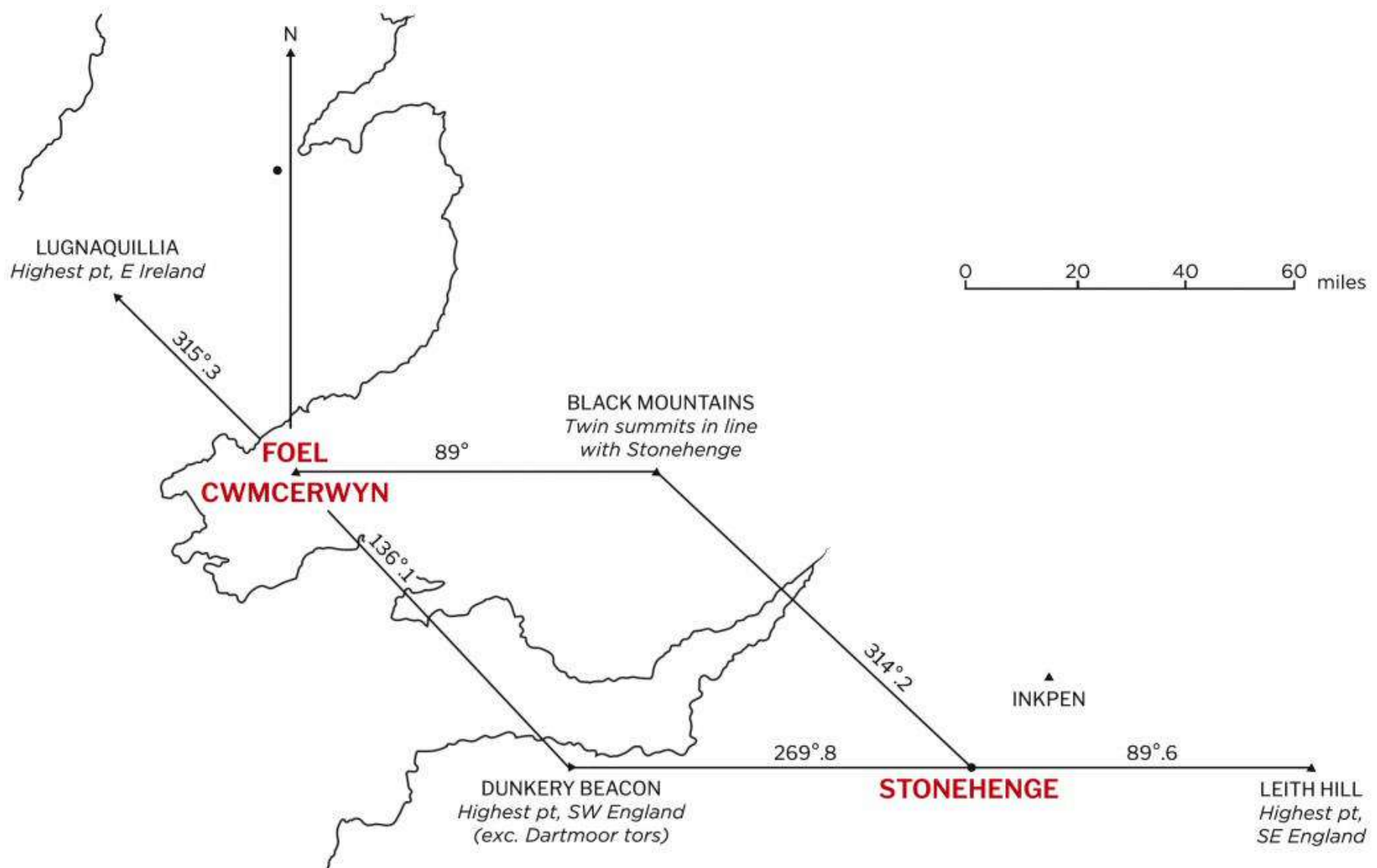
LISTEN



Amanda's story is the subject of *Uncanny* case 12, 'Fatal Collision', available to stream on BBC Sounds: bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m00138wy

THE MEANING OF STONEHENGE

Hills and Directions are the Keys



Dr Garth Weston has spent four decades investigating the influence of landscape features and the major directions on the location and design of stone circles, henges and standing stones.

Regional surveys of these intriguing structures were published in **Monuments and Mountains (2007)** - a catalogue providing the topographical and inter-site relationships of over 1,600 monuments.

STONEHENGE

Three of the highest hilltops in southern Britain lie east, west and north-west. Therefore this is an ideal location for communication with the powerful forces associated with principal summits and directions. Also including the axis points to Inkpen, the highest land in the region.

FOEL CWMCERWYN

Preseli Hills

The only commanding summit in the British Isles with views of important landmarks in four directions. The bluestones were moved to Stonehenge as tokens of the hill.

For more information please visit: thestonehengemap.co.uk

A FREE educational resource for students and educators.

Sutton Hoo

Words: Emma Slattery Williams

WHAT IS SUTTON HOO?

Located on the banks of a river estuary near the Suffolk coast, Sutton Hoo is the site of an early medieval cemetery dating from the sixth and seventh centuries AD. Far more than that, however, it is one of history's most spectacular archaeological finds; a rich treasure trove the likes of which has rarely been discovered anywhere in Europe. The hundreds of artefacts have deepened our understanding of the early medieval period in England.

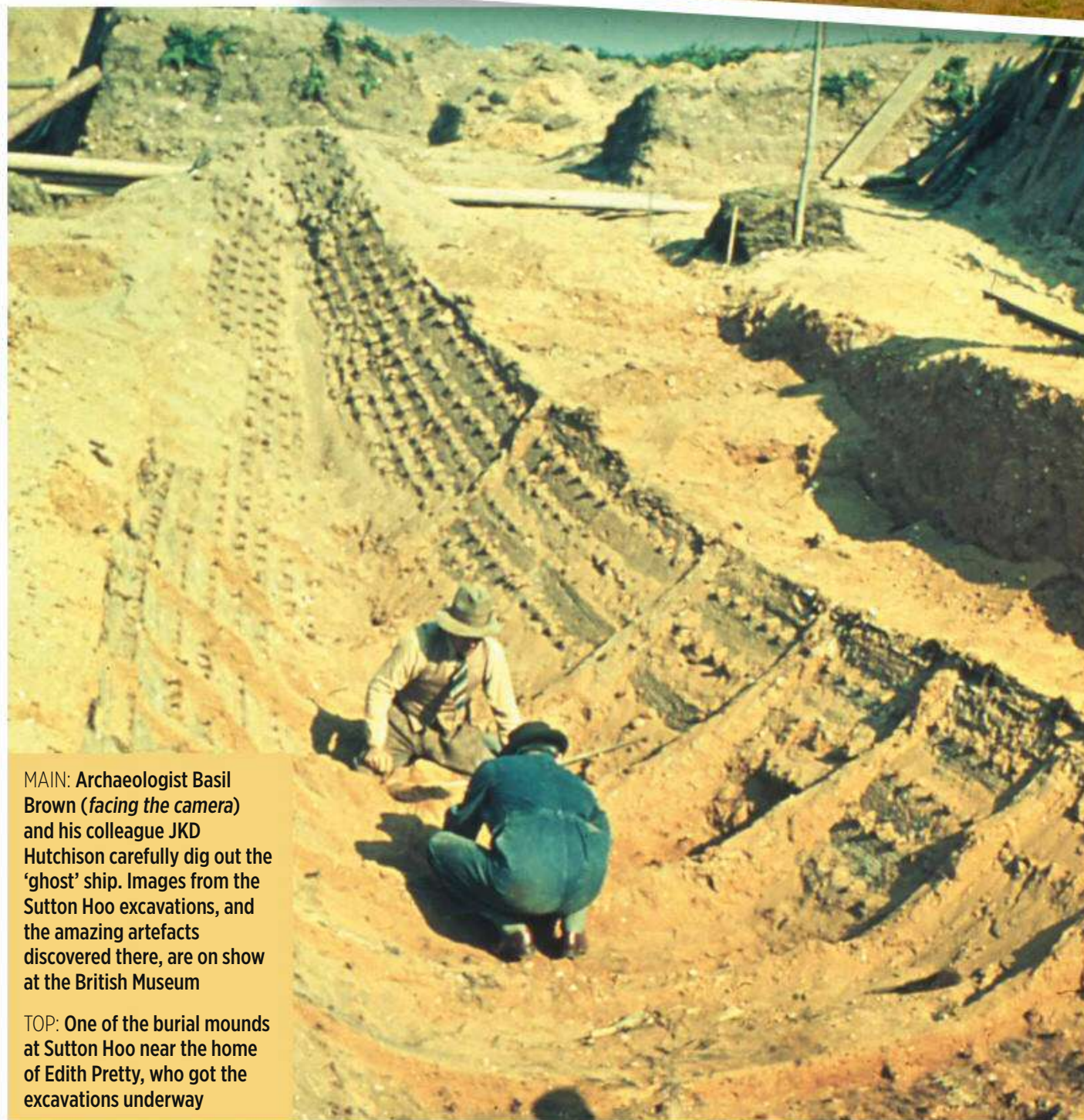
While Sutton Hoo is best known for a magnificent ship burial – inside which was found the ornately decorated helmet that has become an icon of the Anglo Saxons – there are actually multiple burial mounds at the site. Erosion over the centuries, and plundering by treasure hunters, means that some have been lost, while others have yet to be excavated. There could be much more to unearth from those Suffolk fields.

WHEN WAS SUTTON HOO FIRST EXCAVATED, AND BY WHOM?

In 1937, the landowner Edith Pretty decided to have the earthen mounds that had long intrigued her properly investigated. She sought the services of a local and self-taught archaeologist named Basil Brown, who began excavations in the summer of 1938. Choosing not to start with one of the larger mounds (known as Mound 1), he cut trenches across three smaller piles in the hope of finding burial chambers or pits. Although they had been looted, Brown still found many exciting objects, including a cremated man, blue glass, a bronze disc, and fragments of weapons.

The following May, as war was looming on the horizon, Brown returned to Pretty's land and firmly set his sights on Mound 1. As soon as he unearthed the first piece of iron, he realised he was on to something important. A few more pieces later and he predicted that he was looking at the prow of a ship. Such burials were extremely rare for England.

The oak timbers of the 27-metre-long vessel had all rotted away, but a ghostly imprint of the curved hull had been left



MAIN: Archaeologist Basil Brown (*facing the camera*) and his colleague JKD Hutchison carefully dig out the 'ghost' ship. Images from the Sutton Hoo excavations, and the amazing artefacts discovered there, are on show at the British Museum

TOP: One of the burial mounds at Sutton Hoo near the home of Edith Pretty, who got the excavations underway

“A ghostly imprint of the ship's curved hull had been left in the sandy soil”

in the sandy soil – as well as the iron rivets – showing where all the planks had been. By 14 June, Brown had reached the burial chamber and was relieved to see that it was intact, having been missed by past robbers. News of his colossal discovery soon spread and, much to

Brown's chagrin, the excavation was handed over to Charles Phillips from the University of Cambridge.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO UNEARTH THE SHIP BURIAL?

While Phillips and his team took over the digging out of the ship burial – and the British Museum and Office of Works got involved – Brown continued working at Sutton Hoo. By then, however, the outbreak of World War II was imminent and there was no time to lose if

IN A NUTSHELL

YOUR BRIEF EXPLAINER TO HISTORY'S HOT TOPICS

◀ the treasures were to be preserved. Without specialist equipment, Phillips and his team had to use whatever they could, such as coal shovels, pastry brushes and penknives. Eventually, as hundreds of precious artefacts had been located, Phillips officially identified the site as an Anglo Saxon ship burial, just as Brown had predicted.

On 3 September, war was declared and work at Sutton Hoo had to be halted. The treasures were hidden in a disused London Underground tunnel, where they remained safe during the Blitz. Anti glider ditches were created around the mounds in case of enemy landings and Pretty's land was briefly used as a military training ground. An inquest awarded possession of the finds to Pretty, but she bequeathed them all to the nation so that they could be enjoyed by everyone at the British Museum.

It wasn't until 1965 that excavations resumed at Sutton Hoo, by a team led by Rupert Bruce Mitford and Paul Ashbee. Digs in the 1980s explored other mounds, which revealed further

burials: one of a man alongside his horse, and another ship.

WHO WAS BURIED IN THE SHIP?

The identity of the person buried in the Sutton Hoo ship continues to puzzle historians: it's possible we will never know. No remains were found, which inspired the theory that the ship was a memorial rather than a grave, but the acidity of the soil strongly suggests that the body completely decomposed.

Ship burials were reserved for those of high importance, even royalty. The effort alone needed to make one – dragging a heavy ship from the river and burying it – demonstrated the status of the dead. Sutton Hoo could therefore have been the burial ground for the East Anglian dynasty, the Wuffingas. They ruled a kingdom covering the modern day counties of Suffolk and Norfolk, and claimed to be descended from Woden, the Old English name for the Norse god Odin. The finds in the Mound 1 chamber

of precious items made of gold, **garnet and silver certainly support the idea that**

this was a person of high status. Also discovered was a whetstone topped with a bronze stag (often used to symbolise royalty) and an iron stand, which could have been used as a flag standard.

The leading idea is that Sutton Hoo's ship burial was the final resting place for Rædwald, an early medieval king in East Anglia who controversially worshipped pagan gods yet also became a Christian. Rædwald is thought to have died in either AD 616 or AD 627, which fits with the estimated date of the burial.

WHAT OTHER TREASURES WERE FOUND IN THE BURIAL CHAMBER?

A total of 263 objects were discovered in the truly staggering trove of artefacts, intricately made of precious metals and gems as well as bone, textiles and furs. There were weapons – including a sword on what would have been the right side of the body, suggesting the deceased was left handed – clothing, coins, utensils, ornaments and works of extraordinary craftsmanship. The Sutton Hoo trove also had items from around the world: garnets from what is now Sri Lanka, a wooden shield from Scandinavia, shoulder clasps similar to those worn by Romans, and a silver platter from the Byzantine empire.

Of course, the most famous find was a ceremonial helmet, wrapped in cloth in the burial chamber. The centuries had **not been kind: it had rusted badly and shattered into hundreds of fragments, but it was clearly an artefact of elaborate beauty and significance. Years of careful restoration put the helmet back together, and a replica has been made by Royal Armouries.** The full face mask, itself influenced by Scandinavian cultures that the Anglo Saxons had contact with, boasts the image of a dragon in flight,

BELOW LEFT: The Sutton Hoo helmet, reconstructed after being unearthed in hundreds of pieces and now on show at the British Museum

BELOW: The intricately decorated 'great' gold belt buckle, which features snakes, birds and beasts

BELOW RIGHT: An artist's impression of the ship burial taking place at Sutton Hoo





LEFT: The skeletons of a young man and his horse (far left) were found almost intact – unusual at Sutton Hoo due to the high acidity of the soil

BELOW: Many of the treasures, including a replica of the iconic helmet, can be seen at the British Museum



with its wings forming the eyebrows of the helmet and its tail the moustache. It is decorated with fighting warriors, creatures and exquisite patterns.

WHAT HAS BEEN FOUND IN SUTTON HOO'S OTHER MOUNDS?

The only other burial to have survived intact to be excavated, despite the best efforts of robbers, is Mound 17. Inside was buried a young man with his weapons and his horse. Aged in his mid 20s at the time of his death, the unidentified man, dubbed the 'Sutton Hoo Prince', had been laid to rest in an oak coffin alongside a sword, shield, spears, a jewelled belt, drinking vessels and food. His horse had been a sacrifice.

Another mound is the only one at the site thought to have belonged to a woman, so may have been the final resting place of a queen. It had been almost completely destroyed by looters, but iron tacks remained, suggesting the woman was laid on a bed or coffin, with embroidered textiles and the remains of a brooch pin.

And if one ship burial wasn't rare enough, a second was discovered at Sutton Hoo in Mound 2. It may have even

"Sutton Hoo is a link to Anglo-Saxon England and dispels the image of the Dark Ages"

been as rich as the one found by Brown, but most of its items had been removed. There are still mounds that haven't been excavated, so that future archaeologists can make the most of advanced technological methods. It's possible there were originally more than 18 mounds, which have eroded over time.

WHAT MAKES SUTTON HOO SUCH A SIGNIFICANT SITE?

Sutton Hoo became a vital link in the understanding of early medieval England. Due to the scarcity of the written word among the Germanic tribes in the centuries after the fall of the Romans, the period had long been seen as marked by decline: a so-called 'Dark Ages'. Sutton Hoo's discovery dispelled that image, with

clear evidence that the Anglo Saxons were connected with far off cultures through trade, developed an artistic style seen in their craftsmanship, and carried out sophisticated burial practices.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR SUTTON HOO?

The National Trust and Channel 4 series *Time Team* have joined forces to undertake new excavations at Sutton Hoo, with the results expected in spring 2022.

By 2024, the Sutton Hoo Ship's Company also hopes to have finished building its full size replica of the ship, which is currently being constructed in a purpose built longshed in Woodbridge, Suffolk, using authentic methods and materials. More details about the project can be found at saxonship.org.

LISTEN
BBC
RADIO



The Sutton Hoo helmet is discussed on an episode of *A History of the World in 100 Objects* on BBC Radio 4: bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00sl6dt

Samuel Johnson's defining moments

In just under nine years, the famed lexicographer almost single-handedly compiled the most comprehensive dictionary of the English language yet seen. But what drove Johnson to accept the painstaking challenge?

Samuel Johnson was a published author, poet, essayist and biographer by the 1740s, but his career had not taken off or made him money. Certainly the reputation he holds today as a central literary figure of the 18th century, famed for his control of the English language, seemed out of sight. That changed one day in 1746 when a group of booksellers approached Johnson with a monumental task. They wanted him to compile a dictionary more comprehensive than anything seen before, and they paid him the kingly sum of 1,500 guineas as an advance.

The task changed his life – a life that began bleakly in September 1709 with Johnson, in his words, “almost dead”. A sickly child, he contracted scrofula, a disease better known as the ‘king’s evil’ as the touch of the monarch was said to cure it, or so many believed. His parents took the infant Johnson from his hometown of Lichfield, Staffordshire, to London to receive the ‘royal touch’ of Queen Anne. The troubles did not stop there, as an operation left him badly scarred, he was nearly blind and deaf on one side, and had tics indicative of what we now know as Tourette’s syndrome.

A MOST DIFFICULT SPELL

Yet by the time Johnson left to study at the University of Oxford, aged 19, he had a towering physique, as strong as his mind was sharp. While he only lasted 13 months at Pembroke College before insufficient funds forced him to leave without a degree, the time did result in his first publication, a Latin translation of *Messiah* by Alexander Pope. Johnson tried out a number of teaching jobs and even opened a school, using money from Elizabeth, his wife since 1735, a woman 20 years his senior.

When the school failed, Johnson made his way to London with his former student turned-lifelong friend, David Garrick, soon to be a famous actor. He found employment at *The Gentlemen’s Magazine*, churning out articles, poems and biographies, and made something of



An infant Samuel Johnson meets Queen Anne in 1712. It was believed that the monarch’s touch could cure him of scrofula

a name for himself, notably for his criticisms of the government and monarchy and fictionalised speeches from the House of Commons.

Johnson’s magazine work helped secure the commission for the dictionary. Having been saved from financial worries, he set to the daunting mission of compiling all words, devising definitions, and finding quotations as citations with the help of just half a dozen assistants based in his home near Fleet Street. At the same time, Johnson kept up other jobs. In 1749, he published the poem *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, and put on his first play, *Irene*. Then from 1750, he wrote for the periodical *The Rambler* and its successor *The Adventurer*.

After nearly nine years of toil – during which his wife passed away – *A Dictionary of the English Language* was published in 1755. Across its two volumes, Johnson’s landmark tome contained 42,773 entries, each with etymologies and definitions, and backed up by a total of 114,000 quotations taken from a dizzying array of sources dating to the 1500s. The word ‘take’ alone had 134 definitions and covered five pages.

Nothing like Johnson’s dictionary had ever been achieved before. That is not to say there

weren’t omissions and oversights, though. The letter ‘X’ had been left out entirely, and Johnson could not help injecting a sense of humour. He called a lizard “an animal resembling a serpent, with legs added to it,” and described oats as “a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people”. And the definition of dull: “Not exhilarating; not delightful: as, to make dictionaries is dull work.”

Despite the instant and universal acknowledgement of the importance of his dictionary, Johnson could not escape his financial woes. The next year, he was briefly confined to a ‘sponging house’ after failing to pay a debt, and found himself still needing to write for a living, for titles like *The Literary Magazine* and *The Idler*. He penned a novella, *Rasselas*, in a week in 1759, supposedly to pay for his mother’s funeral.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

It was only in 1762 that Johnson received a pension, of £300 a year, which gave him financial security. Now it was time for the lexicographer to be the subject of a great work. In 1763, aged 53, he befriended 22 year old Scottish lawyer James Boswell, who over the years kept copious notes and journals about Johnson, which formed the basis of a major biography, securing Johnson’s reputation as one of the great wits of the 18th century.

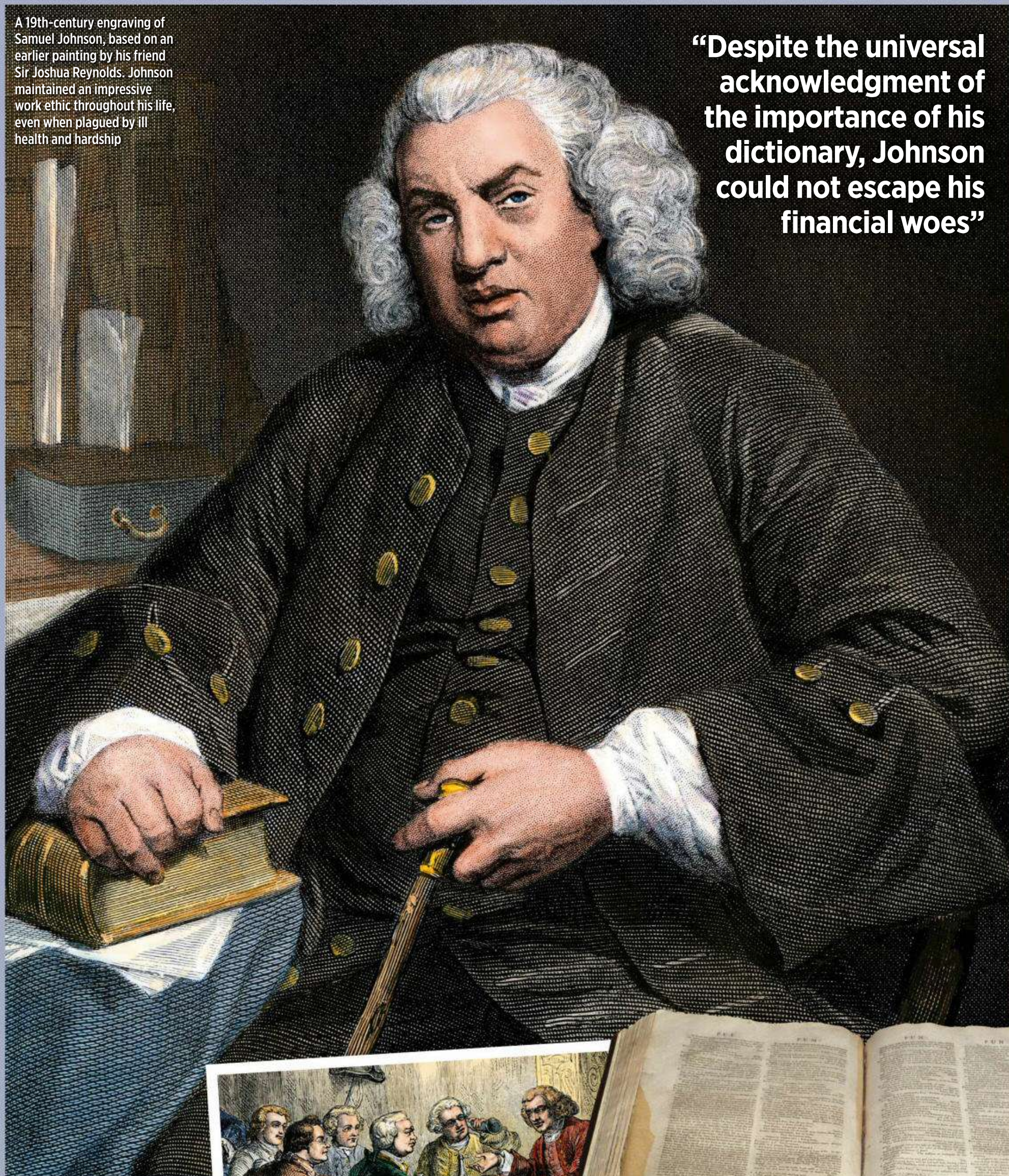
As for Johnson, he continued writing, but now for pleasure. He published a colossal edition of Shakespeare, a travel guide on his trip to Scotland with Boswell, and a 56 volume behemoth entitled *The Lives of the Poets*. His health, which had plagued him his whole life, only got worse as an aging Johnson endured gout, bronchitis and swollen legs and feet, as well as depression. He died on 13 December 1784.

In his dictionary, he defined ‘lexicographer’ as “a writer of dictionaries, a harmless drudge”, but many today would argue that ‘literary giant’ should be added to that definition. 🎯

WORDS: JONNY WILKES

A 19th-century engraving of Samuel Johnson, based on an earlier painting by his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds. Johnson maintained an impressive work ethic throughout his life, even when plagued by ill health and hardship

“Despite the universal acknowledgment of the importance of his dictionary, Johnson could not escape his financial woes”



RIGHT: Johnson (*far right*) depicted deep in conversation with fellow intellectuals at London's Literary Club, including his companion and biographer James Boswell (*centre*)

FAR RIGHT: An original 1755 edition of Johnson's crowning achievement: *A Dictionary of the English Language*



SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

Please complete the order form and send to:
FREEPOST IMMEDIATE MEDIA (please write in capitals)

UK DIRECT DEBIT

☐ I would like to subscribe by Direct Debit and pay £39.99 every 13 issues,
SAVING 44% + NATIONAL TRUST GIFT CARD. (Please complete order form below)

YOUR DETAILS (ESSENTIAL)

Title	Forename	Surname
Address		
		Postcode
Home tel no	Mobile tel no	
Email		

☐ I wish to purchase a gift subscription (please supply gift recipient's name and address on a separate sheet)

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society
to pay by Direct Debit



To: the Manager (Bank/Building Society)	
Address	
	Postcode
Name(s) of account holder(s)	
Bank/Building Society account number	Branch sort code
Reference number (internal use only)	
Originator's identification number	Please pay Immediate Media Co Bristol Ltd Debts from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Immediate Media Co Bristol Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.
7 1 0 6 4 4	
Signature	Date / /

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit mandates from some types of account

KEEP IN TOUCH

BBC History Revealed (published by Immediate Media Company Limited) would like to send you updates, special offers and promotions by email. You can unsubscribe at any time.

Please tick here if you would like to receive these ☐

We would also like to keep in touch by post and telephone about other relevant offers and promotions from Immediate Media. If you do not wish to be contacted this way please tick here: post ☐ phone ☐ For more information about how to change the way we contact you, and how we hold your personal information, please see our privacy policy which can be viewed online at immediate.co.uk/privacy-policy

OTHER PAYMENT OPTIONS

☐ UK by credit/debit card or cheque for just £49.99 for 13 issues (**SAVING 30% + NATIONAL TRUST GIFT CARD**)

☐ Europe inc Eire €68.00 for 13 issues ☐ Rest of World \$70.00 for 13 issues ☐ USA \$65.00 for 13 issues

CREDIT CARD DETAILS Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Issue no Valid from Expiry date

Signature Date

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to Immediate Media Co for £

OVERSEAS Please complete the order form and send to:

BBC History Revealed magazine, PO Box 3320, 3 Queensbridge, NORTHAMPTON, NN4 7BF

*Offer open to new UK customers subscribing to the print edition only. National Trust gift card will be dispatched within 28 days working days. Full details of the Direct Debit Guarantee are available on request. You will receive 13 issues per year. Your subscription will start with the next available issue. Offer ends 17 March 2022. Gift cards can be used at most National Trust properties (in England, Wales & N.I.); at shops, cafes and at admission points – for entry or membership; Historic House Hotels and the online shop. It can also be used for telephone National Trust holiday cottage bookings. This card cannot be used for any other telephone or online purchases. Gift cards expire either 24 months after the date of issue or 24 months from the last transaction. It cannot be accepted at certain sites, or outlets not operated by the National Trust. For more information: nationaltrust.org.uk/giftcards
HURRY! Offer ends 17 March 2022



SUBSCRIBER BENEFITS:

- ★ **Receive a £30 National Trust gift card** to spend at hundreds of amazing places
- ★ **Save 44% off the shop price** – pay just £39.99 for 13 issues when you subscribe by Direct Debit
- ★ **Free UK delivery** direct to your door, at no extra charge!
- ★ **Never miss an issue** of our action-packed magazine, **suitable for all members of the family**

RECEIVE A £30 NATIONAL TRUST GIFT CARD

INTRODUCTORY
OFFER!

when you subscribe to **BBC HISTORY
REVEALED**

A National Trust gift card can be used towards entry, membership, within on-site cafés and shops, stays in holiday cottages or Historic House Hotels and online shop purchases.

**HURRY! OFFER ENDS
17 March 2022**



Subscribe online or call us



www.buysubscriptions.com/HRP105



03330 162 116⁺ Quote code **HRP105**

⁺UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). Outside of free call packages, call charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm. Overseas readers call +44 1604 973 723.



Dr Nicola Tallis
discusses life in
Elizabethan England
on the HistoryExtra
podcast: historyextra.com/everything-elizabethans

ALAMY X4, GETTY X3, BRIDGEMAN X1

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO

The Elizabethans

The reign of Elizabeth I (1558–1603) is often described as England's 'golden age' – a period in which new worlds were discovered, the arts flourished, and the religious turmoil that had defined the regimes of previous monarchs was replaced by comparative stability.

The last chapter of the Tudor dynasty, Elizabeth's reign would go on to eclipse those of her father and half siblings, and – more than four centuries after her death – she is still regarded as one of the nation's greatest rulers.

In this month's issue of *BBC History Revealed*, we'll be exploring the life and times of the Virgin Queen, looking at how her unconventional

background – as the daughter of the ill-fated Anne Boleyn – would go on to shape the type of ruler she became. Guided on our journey by historian Dr Nicola Tallis, we'll meet some of the key advisors and political figures that formed Elizabeth's close circle, and examine her defiant battle against the Spanish Armada in 1588.

Crucially, however, we'll also shine a spotlight on the experiences of ordinary Elizabethan men, women and children, and the sights and smells that would have dominated life during the latter half of the 16th century.

To help you get your bearings, we begin with a timeline of the era's most important milestones – simply turn the page to get started...

30 The Elizabethan golden age

Discover the moments that defined the Virgin Queen's storied reign

32 Everything you wanted to know about the Elizabethans

Dr Nicola Tallis answers our questions about the era – from what ordinary people thought of Elizabeth's regime, to their personal hygiene habits

36 The making of the Virgin Queen

We delve into the queen's love life – a topic that has both fascinated and divided historians for centuries

38 Elizabeth and her government

What powers did Elizabeth's government wield, and who were her key advisors?

40 Elizabethan daily life

Take a trip through 16th-century England and its heady mixture of sights, sounds and smells

44 Lost Elizabethans: the Africans who lived in England

We uncover the forgotten stories of England's black Tudors

48 The Spanish Armada

A day-by-day account of how Elizabeth's greatest military victory unfolded

50 The birth of an empire

Discover how England became a major player on the world stage

54 Settling the religious divide

How did Elizabeth try and reconcile the vast differences between England's Protestants and Catholics?



DR NICOLA TALLIS is an author and historian, with a particular interest in the 15th and 16th centuries. Her books include *Elizabeth's Rival: The Tumultuous Tale of Lettice Knollys, Countess of Leicester* (Michael O'Mara, 2017).

THE ELIZABETHAN GOLDEN AGE

7 SEP 1533

▼ Elizabeth is born to Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII at Greenwich Palace.



15 JAN 1559

▼ Elizabeth I is crowned at Westminster Abbey. That date had been chosen by royal astrologer, John Dee, who deemed it auspicious.

3 APR 1559

The Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis ends the Italian War of 1551–59 and conflict between England and France, which had begun during the reign of Mary I. As a result, England formally loses Calais, its final territorial possession on the continent.

6 JUL 1560



▲ The Treaty of Edinburgh establishes peace between England and Scotland. Mary, Queen of Scots, however, refuses to give up her claim to the English throne.

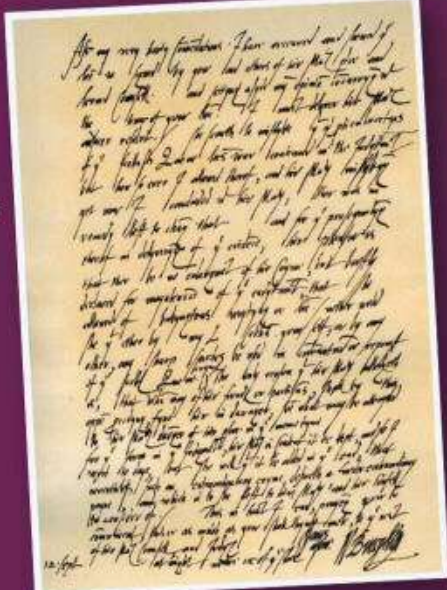
MAR 1562

A proposed meeting between Elizabeth and her Catholic cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, is abandoned with the outbreak of religious violence in France, in which Mary's uncle, Francis, Duke of Guise, orders a massacre of Protestants in Vassy.



OCT 1586

► In the wake of the Babington Plot to murder Elizabeth, Mary goes on trial. Coded letters had been found from the imprisoned Queen of Scots and English Catholic Sir Anthony Babington.



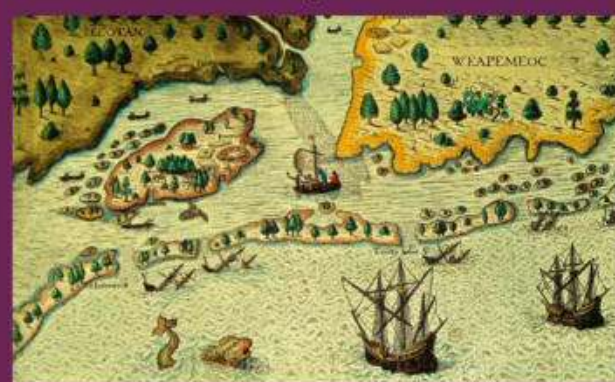
6 JUL 1586

The Treaty of Berwick is signed between Elizabeth and James VI of Scotland, restoring peace between the nations and unofficially securing James as Elizabeth's successor.

10 AUG 1585

The Treaty of Nonsuch sees Elizabeth support the Dutch rebels fighting against Spanish rule. It is seen by Philip II as a declaration of war; hostilities will remain between England and Spain until 1604.

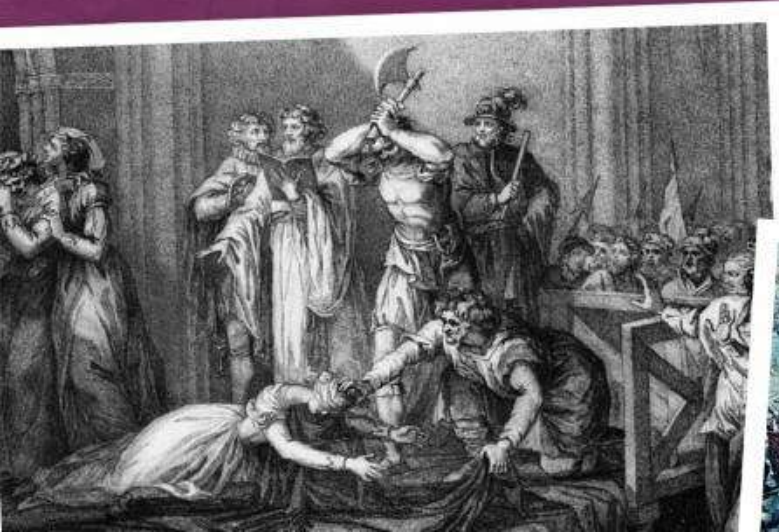
AUG 1585



▲ The first English colony in North America is established on Roanoke Island. Attacks from Native Americans and food shortages force the colonists to return within a year.

8 FEB 1587

▼ Mary, Queen of Scots is beheaded for treason at Fotheringhay Castle. A highly reluctant Elizabeth deliberates signing her cousin's death warrant for four months.



APR 1587

▼ As the Spanish prepare to invade, Sir Francis Drake leads a series of raids on the port of Cádiz. His successes – the 'singeing of the king of Spain's beard' – delays the Armada for a year.



JUL 1587

A second colony is founded at Roanoke (modern-day North Carolina) by John White. Three years later, he returns from a supply trip to discover that the colonists have disappeared without a trace. The fate of the 'lost colony' remains a mystery to this day.

19 JUL 1588

The Spanish Armada is spotted off the coast of Cornwall. After several clashes over the coming days, the English send eight fireships towards the enemy, breaking their formation. The ensuing battle of Gravelines ends in defeat for the Spanish.

9 AUG 1588

Elizabeth delivers a rousing speech to the English land forces at Tilbury Docks, in preparation for an enemy invasion. But the Spanish are already on their way home, with half of their fleet lost.



Elizabeth I's rule was marked by religious turmoil and repeated threats to her throne, but she is still regarded as one of the most powerful figures of the Tudor dynasty. We chart the key events during the Virgin Queen's life and reign...

WORDS: EMMA SLATTERY WILLIAMS



2 MAY 1568

◀ Having been forced to abdicate in favour of her infant son James, Mary, Queen of Scots escapes Lochleven Castle, where she has been imprisoned since June 1567, and flees to England. There, she is kept prisoner in various castles for 19 years.

NOV 1569

▶ Two powerful Catholic nobles from the north of England, Thomas Percy and Charles Neville, lead a major rebellion against Elizabeth's rule. Their aim is to put Mary on the throne, but the so-called Rising of the North is crushed.



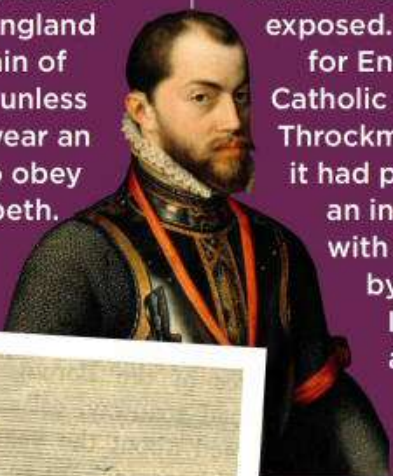
25 FEB 1570

▼ Elizabeth is declared a heretic and excommunicated by Pope Pius V.



1585

Parliament orders all Catholic and Jesuit priests to leave England on pain of death, unless they swear an oath to obey Elizabeth.



1583

▼ Another plot to replace the queen with her cousin is exposed. Named for English Catholic Francis Throckmorton, it had planned an invasion with funding by Philip II (left) and the pope.

4 APR 1581

▼ Explorer and privateer Francis Drake is knighted after becoming the first Englishman to circumnavigate the world.



1576

The Act for the relief of the Poor provides the first workhouses for unemployed people and houses of correction for vagrants. Punishments are issued to those who refuse to pay the poor rate for the needy of the parish.

1571

With the backing of Philip II of Spain, an Italian banker named Roberto Ridolfi hatches a plan to assassinate Elizabeth. The plot is uncovered, leading the Spanish ambassador, Guerau de Espés, to be expelled. Another supporter, the Duke of Norfolk, is executed in 1572.



1599

◀ The Globe Theatre is built in Southwark, London, by the Lord Chamberlain's Men - a theatre company partly owned by William Shakespeare.

1592-93

An outbreak of plague hits London, forcing Elizabeth to evacuate the royal court to Windsor Castle. The disease kills at least 15,000 people.

1601

The Poor Law is enacted, remaining in effect for more than 200 years. Almshouses are provided for those unable to work, while the able-bodied poor are sent to workhouses and vagrants to houses of corrections. Apprenticeships are also provided for poor children.

24 MAR 1603

▶ Elizabeth, the 'Virgin Queen', dies at the age of 69, unmarried and childless. The throne passes to her nearest royal relative, the new James VI of Scotland and I of England and Ireland. ☉



Queen Elizabeth I depicted in procession with her courtiers, c1600–03. The monarch regularly went out and visited different parts of her realm, giving subjects the chance to see her in person



EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ELIZABETHANS

Dr Nicola Tallis answers key questions about everyday life – from sport to personal hygiene – during England’s so-called ‘golden age’

Q: What did ordinary people think about having a female ruler?

A: For the most part, Elizabeth was extremely well-loved, especially at the beginning of her reign; her accession was greeted with heartfelt enthusiasm by many of her subjects. People liked the

fact that she was young, like her father had been when he became king, and Elizabeth definitely had the common touch. We can see this during the procession that took place prior to her coronation, when she took the time to engage in the pageants that were staged in her honour on the streets of London.

Elizabeth remained pretty popular throughout her time on the throne

and was considered quite an accessible monarch; she went out most years on a summer progress that took her to various parts of her realm, which gave her subjects an opportunity to see and admire their queen. And Elizabeth’s popularity really soared after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Of course, she wasn’t liked by everyone,



LEFT: Elizabeth's cousin and lady of the bedchamber, Katherine Knollys, sometimes found herself at the receiving end of the queen's fiery temper

BELOW: A c1590 painting imagines the late Henry VIII alongside his heirs. Decades after his death, the king was fondly remembered for his fight against Rome



and there were plots at various points in her reign to unseat her, some involving her own subjects.

It's also important to note that some of the people within her court occasionally felt the sharp edge of her tongue. For example, Elizabeth was very close to her cousin, Katherine Knollys, who became one of the most important women in the royal bedchamber. However, according to the accounts of Katherine's husband, Francis, Elizabeth sometimes made Katherine weep to the extent that he and his wife were prepared to leave court and live quietly in the country, although this never happened.

The idea of female rule was still relatively new to England at the time of Elizabeth's accession. People only had the example of Elizabeth's half-sister, Mary, to draw from, and there weren't many happy memories of that. Life in 1558, when Elizabeth came to the throne, wasn't easy for many of her subjects. So, although as queen people looked to Elizabeth to try and improve things, in reality, because she was a woman, they didn't hold out much hope that she'd actually be successful at doing so.

Q: How did people remember Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII?

A: Henry had made a big impression, and he was remembered throughout the reigns of all of his children. We know that Elizabeth revered him and his memory; by the time she came to the throne, Henry was known as 'Great Harry', who had saved England from the folds of the Catholic Church in Rome. This was really his legacy and his posterity; everything else that he'd done, including executing two of his wives and a number of his subjects, seemed to have been either completely forgotten or overlooked.

Elizabeth, at least in public, always identified with her father and was



"PEOPLE ONLY HAD THE REIGN OF MARY TO DRAW FROM, AND THERE WEREN'T MANY HAPPY MEMORIES OF THAT"

Elizabeth's Catholic half-sister, Mary I (r1553–58), had been the first queen of England to reign in her own right

keen that she be remembered as Great Harry's daughter.

Q: What in the way of propaganda existed in the Elizabethan era?

A: Propaganda was rife in Elizabethan England, and much of it centred around the queen herself. I've already mentioned that Elizabeth went on regular summer progresses, which allowed her subjects to

see their queen. But these occasions also provided an opportunity for Elizabeth to keep an eye on her nobles. What's also interesting is that she would often order accounts of her progresses to be published, so that her subjects could find out what she'd been up to. These were hugely popular, and, as the queen controlled printing, it was a way of directing what her subjects read.

Elizabeth's public image was also very carefully controlled. Her portraits always showed her as a beautiful, ageless queen, and this really added to the Gloriana myth that surrounded her. She really was the mistress of public relations. And this is something that's clearly conveyed in many of her propaganda portraits, which often contain messages of purity and power. The famous Armada portrait is a really good example of this; it contains many allusions to Elizabeth's power and her position as a defender of her realm and of the might of England.

Q: How hygienic were the Elizabethans?

A: Elizabeth I's first godson, Sir John Harrington, was actually responsible for inventing the first flushing water closet, or toilet, in 1596. But since there was no public sewage system, the wealthy would have used a closed stool, which was, essentially, a padded box with a hole in it, while the poor would have had to make do with a chamber pot. Rags were often used in lieu of toilet paper and it wasn't uncommon to see men urinating in the streets, either.

In terms of other acts of personal

◀ hygiene, people might possibly have combed their hair. And we know there were some who attempted to clean their teeth with wooden toothpicks, or gold toothpicks if they could afford it. You might have also cleaned your teeth by rubbing them with ashes of burnt rosemary. Elizabeth herself is known to have owned tooth cloths with which she rubbed her teeth. And we also know that people chewed herbs to sweeten their breath.

If you were a lower class Elizabethan, bathing regularly really wasn't an option; you might potentially bathe a few times a year if you had the opportunity to. But generally, clothes were relied upon to soak up the smells and sweat of daily life.

The nobility might bathe once every couple of weeks, and we know there was a definite interest in cleanliness at this time because there are recipes for soap in Elizabethan household instruction manuals. So people were obviously interested in keeping themselves clean. Elizabeth herself had baths in all of her palaces and famously once quipped that she bathed once a month, whether she needed to or not.

Q: What did the Elizabethans do for entertainment?

A: Leisure was a hugely important part of Elizabethan life, for all classes. But there were differences between the types of entertainment available at different levels of society. Some people employed jesters or fools, whose job it was to entertain them. One in particular is mentioned by name in court accounts, and that is an Italian named Monarcho. He was employed by Elizabeth I and he is even mentioned in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*.

Laughing, then, was a very important part of Elizabethan entertainment. Drinking, of course, was always a popular pastime, as was gambling. People might place bets on games of chess and cards or the outcome of a wrestling match. Archery, too, was popular, as was football, although the latter was a very different game to that of today because you could pick up the ball and run with it!

Bowling, juggling, music, dancing and attending fairs were also favourite pastimes. Most nobles were expected to

play a musical instrument, while, among the lower classes, instruments such as fiddles and bagpipes featured heavily. In 1567, there was even an attempt to start a lottery scheme. Ticket holders were promised a monetary prize and also freedom from arrest for all crimes other than murder, piracy or treason. Unfortunately, it was something that never took off – more's the pity.

Blood sports were popular with many, including the queen, and these included cockfighting and animal baiting, which often took place on London's South Bank. Dogs against horses (sometimes with monkey riders for the dogs) featured heavily, and so did bears against the famous English mastiffs. Bears would sometimes have their teeth broken beforehand so that they couldn't bite the dogs. The bears used in these baitings were occasionally given nicknames, and became akin to local celebrities.

Q: How important was the theatre in Elizabethan society?

A: The Elizabethan era was the great age of theatre, and the first permanent playhouse in England was built by James Burbage, in 1576, in Shoreditch, and was simply named 'The Theatre'. Soon, playhouses were springing up all over London. There was a real growth in education during Elizabeth's reign, which meant that educated men who wrote plays had the opportunity to showcase their work in this medium – men like William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton, to name just a few.

The great thing about the theatre was that it provided entertainment that could be enjoyed by all levels of society, even the poor. For them, tickets to attend a performance at the theatre would have cost a penny to stand and watch. Wealthier people, as you would expect, paid for a cushioned seat.

A decorated toothpick, chamber pot and comb: all examples of items that our 16th-century forebears might have used when it came to personal hygiene





Vicious blood sports, such as bear baiting, attracted huge crowds – particularly on London's South Bank



The theatre became a really clever way of spreading ideas because it appealed to so many people. We see this in 1601, when former royal favourite Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, who was planning a rebellion against Elizabeth I, requested a performance of *Richard II* at The Globe, hoping that the play's subject matter [the king's deposing by Henry IV and his imprisonment and murder] would rouse people to rebel. Fortunately for Elizabeth, it didn't work.

Q: The Elizabethan era is often referred to as a 'golden age'. Was that really the case?

A: The whole idea of the Elizabethan era as a 'golden age' came about after the queen's death, when people started to realise how good they had had it during



ABOVE: Jesters, dancers and musicians were employed by the wealthy as a form of private entertainment

ABOVE LEFT: The Earl of Essex, seen apologising to Elizabeth after plotting against her, had hoped that a performance of *Richard II* would encourage people to rebel against her regime

her reign; the cult of Elizabeth I was revered and revived continually in the centuries that followed. It's a view that has been questioned recently, though, and I think there's no clear-cut answer.

The Elizabethan age was undoubtedly a time of great change, with flourishing art, literature and architecture. And by the time of Elizabeth's death in 1603, England had become one of the most powerful nations in Europe. So, a lot had changed in the years that Elizabeth was on the throne.

But was it all success? No, there were failures, too. In short, I think we have to be realistic and say that yes, Elizabeth provided strong and stable government for the most part of her reign, but it wasn't all perfect, and so, in some ways, it doesn't seem right to portray it as such. 🎯

INTERVIEW: RHIANNON DAVIES
WORDS: CHARLOTTE HODGMAN

DR NICOLA TALLIS is an author and historian, with a particular interest in the 15th and 16th centuries. Her books include *Elizabeth's Rival: The Tumultuous Tale of Lettice Knollys, Countess of Leicester* (Michael O'Mara, 2017)

THE MAKING OF THE VIRGIN QUEEN

Elizabeth considered herself married to England, yet many suitors still tried to win her hand, says **Amy Licence**

To paraphrase Jane Austen, it was a truth universally acknowledged by the Tudors that a single woman in possession of a good kingdom must be in want of a husband. Elizabeth – the famed ‘Virgin Queen’ – disagreed. During her 44-year reign, the corridors of Whitehall and Greenwich buzzed with intrigue and gossip as the queen swept past with her latest favourite, dressed in her elaborate strings of pearls, red hair held high against gauzy wings. Culturally, she was nothing less than iconic, both in behaviour and appearance.

As a woman, even one sitting on the throne, Elizabeth was constantly coming into conflict with the expectations of the men around her; consistent in her refusal to marry, yet also exploiting gender stereotypes to buy herself time. It is partly for those reasons that she continues to fascinate and elude us. In her 1962 biography, Edith Sitwell described Elizabeth and her court as “the queen and her hive”, conjuring up images of male courtiers buzzing obediently around their queen bee.

Robert Dudley, Christopher Hatton, Francis Drake, Walter Raleigh and a swathe of foreign suitors competed for her attention with their extravagant gifts and compliments, but Elizabeth was determined not to marry from the outset. It was an unusual step for a woman of her times, when the fairer sex was considered to be inconsistent, illogical and untrustworthy.

MARRIAGE TROUBLES

Since her early childhood, Elizabeth had witnessed first-hand how damaging marriage could be. She was barely old enough to have remembered the mother executed on her husband’s whim, while her time living in the household of her stepmother, Catherine Parr, exposed Elizabeth to the advances of Parr’s lecherous husband, Thomas Seymour, implicating her in his treasonous plans to seize control of Edward VI.

She endured a series of interrogations at the time of his fall, and then a period

of house arrest in 1554 when English rebels rose against the proposed match of her sister, Mary I, with Philip II of Spain. That proved to be an unhappy marriage, with an unresolved power struggle between husband and wife and resentment over the imposition of foreign priorities. By the time Elizabeth succeeded to the throne in 1558, she was resolved that marriage was dangerous; husbands could be untrustworthy; and the best person to rely upon was herself.

LOVE AND DUTY

Yet, in spite of her conviction, Elizabeth was in love. While her councillors urged her to marry for the good of the kingdom, her heart already belonged to Robert Dudley, the suave, charismatic son and grandson of executed traitors, whom she had known since childhood. Speculation ran rife as they spent so much time in each other’s company, although the likelihood of them consummating their feelings was slim given the lack of privacy and vast numbers of prying eyes.

When Dudley’s wife was found dead at the bottom of a staircase, Elizabeth realised the need to distance herself. She played the game of would-be fiancée with aplomb, engaging foreign ambassadors and potential suitors in a drawn-out courtship, giving her council hope until her age ruled out child bearing. By that point, her advisors even argued against her marriage on the grounds that pregnancy and confinement were too great a risk.

As Elizabeth aged, the world changed around her. Theatres sprang up in London and her privateers brought back tobacco and potatoes from across the Atlantic, or furs from Russia. The queen was frequently the muse of poets, playwright and artists, transforming her into an iconic, abstract figure: a goddess, Gloriana or the Faerie Queene.

Their depictions reflected Elizabeth’s careful management of her public image, controlling and censoring portraits of her person. She ensured that miniaturist Isaac Oliver received no more commissions after producing an

unflattering work. Foreign visitors could more safely voice criticism, with the French ambassador commenting in 1597 that her face was “long and thin” and appeared to be “very aged”, with many missing teeth impairing her speech.

Elizabeth painted herself thick with make-up and donned jewels to maintain her image of regality. The façade was more difficult to maintain after her young favourite, Robert Devereux, entered her bedchamber unannounced in 1599 to find her in a state of undress and wigless. By this point, the popularity that kept her buoyant through the previous decades was waning. Courtiers now mocked the old queen – and looked to Scotland for her successor – considering her metaphoric for a dead era.

Elizabeth’s increasing ill-health, which became apparent at the beginning of 1603, left her incapacitated in reality, compared with the times when she had feigned illnesses in order to exploit the “weak and feeble” female stereotype. For much of her reign, Elizabeth was neither. She had the heart and stomach of a king and skilfully played the cards that she had been dealt to the best of her ability. 

Elizabeth is welcomed to Kenilworth Castle by her great love, Robert Dudley – but she would never marry him

AMY LICENCE is a historian of women’s lives in the medieval and early modern periods. Her most recent book is *Living Like a Tudor: Woodsmoke and Sage: A Sensory Journey Through Tudor England* (Pegasus Books, 2021)



**"THE QUEEN WAS
RESOLVED THAT MARRIAGE
WAS DANGEROUS AND THE
BEST PERSON TO RELY
UPON WAS HERSELF"**

NON SINE SOLE
IRIS.



ABOVE: Elizabeth controlled her image with propaganda portraits – she was in her sixties when this was painted

RIGHT: An unusually realistic depiction of the queen from c1595

BELOW: Robert Devereux, for a time Elizabeth's favourite



ELIZABETH AND HER GOVERNMENT

The Virgin Queen ruled England with a firm grip, and did not hesitate to clash with her political advisors

Elizabeth I came to the throne at a time when being a monarch was still very much a man's role. England's previous female rulers didn't have a particularly good track record: the reign of Elizabeth's half sister, Mary, had been clouded by religious persecution and violence, while Lady Jane Grey (the named successor of Edward VI) had ended up losing her head after just nine days. Back in the 12th century, Empress Matilda had even waged a civil war to stake her claim to the throne, as her gender meant many people didn't think she was a suitable candidate. With this in mind, the English people can't have been terribly optimistic about Elizabeth's chances of success.

As was common at the time, Elizabeth chose members of the nobility to sit as

part of her government, with her closest advisors forming a body known as the Privy Council. The role of the Privy Council was to advise the monarch on both domestic and foreign issues, but the queen always had the final say. In fact, Elizabeth managed to boost her power by cutting the total number of councillors down from 50 to just 19, removing many members of the clergy in the process. This move, as well as her decision to accommodate former members of Mary's Catholic government alongside her own Protestant advisors, was intended to make sure that religious matters did not dominate affairs of the state.

THE WILL OF THE MONARCH

Elizabeth's Parliament had a House of Lords and a House of Commons, but that's where similarities with the modern

system ends. Overall, Parliament exerted far less power than it does today, and it certainly wasn't a true reflection of the people it was supposed to serve: the House of Commons, for instance, was almost entirely composed of knights, merchants, and members of the gentry. Additionally, MPs were voted in by a small group of wealthy male landowners – most of the English population would remain disenfranchised for many centuries to come.

During Elizabeth's 44 year reign, Parliament only met 13 times, and the queen also had the power to veto any acts that they wanted to pass. She also ensured that her privy councillors sat in on the proceedings, so they could keep a watchful eye and maintain control. Elizabeth typically only called



ABOVE: A 16th-century image depicts Elizabeth with members of her Privy Council. She could listen to their advice, but she didn't have to follow it

LEFT: Elizabeth opens Parliament – a duty that the reigning queen still performs to this day



One particularly heated confrontation between Elizabeth and Essex saw the earl nearly draw his sword on the sovereign

“A SOURCE OF CONTENTION WAS HER REFUSAL TO MARRY, WHICH INCREASED THE LIKELIHOOD OF A SUCCESSION DISPUTE”

on Parliament when she wanted to raise money through taxes and pass new laws. In fact, new taxes or parliamentary subsidies were requested by the queen during all but two parliamentary sessions, with the resulting funds used to wage wars and crush rebellions.

REVOLT FROM WITHIN

Although Elizabeth had surrounded herself with a close knit group of trusted advisors, that didn't mean she was always safe from them. In 1593, Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex, was made a privy councillor. The stepson of Robert Dudley (see box, right), Essex had been a favourite of the monarch for many years and their relationship was initially a convivial one.

However, things began to sour in 1596, when Elizabeth installed the earl's hated rival, Robert Cecil, to the position of secretary of state. Essex disagreed with the appointment, and the two men soon built rival factions. Matters then reached boiling point when Essex went against the queen's orders and made an unfavourable truce with the rebels in Ireland something that led to him being placed under house arrest.

Rather than accepting his sanction, however, Essex gathered his supporters and marched on London, demanding that Elizabeth remove Cecil from office. Fortunately for the monarch, the Privy Council had already got wind of the rebellion, and it was halted before it had

a chance of succeeding. Essex was executed for treason on 25 February 1601.

Despite the power Elizabeth wielded, England's MPs became more willing to criticise her as her reign went on. One source of contention was her refusal to marry, which increased the likelihood of a succession dispute. However, Elizabeth stuck to her guns. Many of the eligible foreign princes suggested to her were Catholic (such as her former brother in law, Philip II of Spain, who did actually propose to Elizabeth after Mary I's death) and marrying them would have only exacerbated religious tensions in a country that was already divided. Without a foreign husband, Elizabeth also had a better chance of shielding England from outside interference.

But there was also religious dissent expressed from within Parliament, too. Some MPs were strict Protestants known as Puritans who wanted every last remnant of Catholicism totally eradicated, whereas Elizabeth took a more pragmatic approach in order to keep the peace. One notable Puritan, Sir Peter Wentworth, was sent to the Tower of London after complaining that Parliament was not able to discuss matters such as religion freely. 

WORDS: EMMA SLATTERY WILLIAMS

THE QUEEN'S MEN

Elizabeth I surrounded herself with capable advisors and royal favourites

WILLIAM CECIL, LORD BURGHLEY

Cecil was the most important minister of Elizabeth's reign and held the position of secretary of state for 40 years. He was highly trusted by the queen and was with her at the news of her accession. But the duo's relationship became strained when Cecil persuaded the queen to execute Mary, Queen of Scots – something Elizabeth was reluctant to do, as she was both her cousin and a fellow monarch.



SIR FRANCIS WALSHINGHAM

As the 'royal spymaster', Walsingham oversaw the secret service and ran a large network of spies – something of a necessity given the sheer number of conspiracies levelled at the queen. Notably, he uncovered the plot that led to the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, using double agents and cryptanalysts to decode secret messages that had been sent to the imprisoned monarch. Walsingham's talents were also vital when England found itself under threat from the Spanish Armada, helping to instigate the reinforcements of the nation's coastal defences.



ROBERT DUDLEY, EARL OF LEICESTER

Close friends since childhood, Robert Dudley was the great love of Elizabeth's life. He was one of the most important figures in Elizabeth's court, and his unexpected death in 1588 caused the queen to lock herself away for several days, completely stricken with grief.



WILLIAM HERBERT, EARL OF PEMBROKE

William Herbert was certainly no stranger to Tudor politics, having previously served under Elizabeth's father, half-brother and half-sister. As well as being a member of the queen's Privy Council, he was also steward of the royal household between 1568 and his death in 1570.



THE SIGHTS AND SMELLS OF DAILY LIFE

Dr Ian Mortimer takes us on a sensory journey through Elizabethan England: from bustling streets to fragrant kitchens

The reign of Elizabeth I is remembered as a 'golden age' for England. It calls to mind the genius of Shakespeare, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and the inspiring architecture of stately homes such as Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire (famous for being 'more glass than wall') – not to mention those more modest, but equally charismatic black-and-white timber-framed town houses found almost everywhere.

Add the exploration of the Americas and the discoveries of exotic wonders such as tobacco and potatoes, and the circumnavigation of the world by English mariners, and you can see immediately that this was an age full of ambition and confidence. You might also picture the gentlemen wearing tights and people of quality sporting one of those starched linen ruffs around their necks. Let's face it: you have to be confident of yourself to carry off that look.

These are all features of the Elizabethan age. Yet they are not the images that would have dominated people's minds at the time. Few people outside the upper classes would have seen a stately home up close, and even fewer would have come across a potato. The labouring classes, accounting for more than four-fifths of the population, did not wear a ruff.

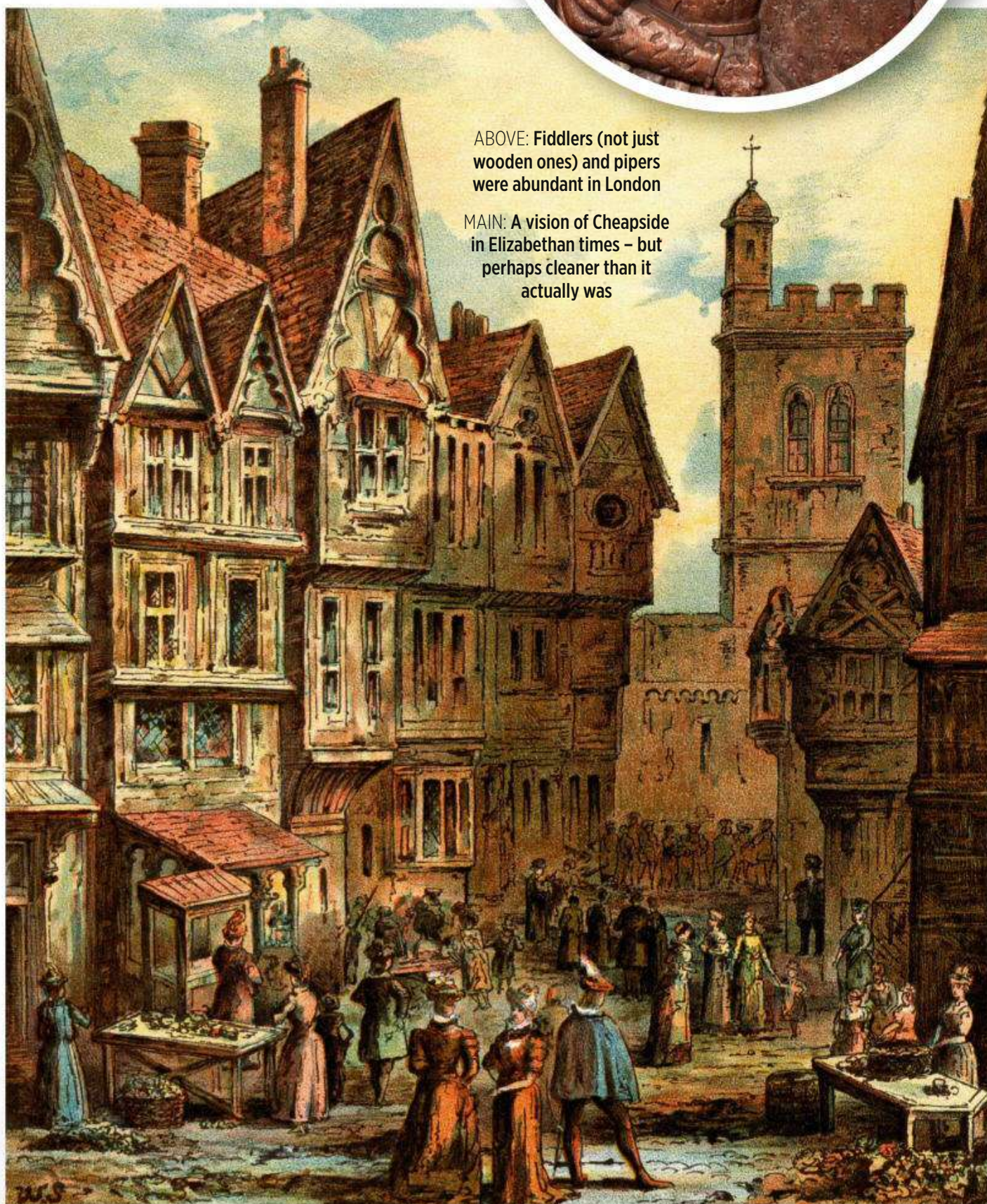
QUALITY OF LIFE

What made these people different from their ancestors, in their own minds, was how they lived. They were aware that almost all of them were Protestants whereas their ancestors had been Catholics. Beyond that, they were most conscious of their quality of life. It was noted by the clergyman William Harrison in his *Description of England* (1577) that old Essex farmers said that three things had changed completely in their



ABOVE: Fiddlers (not just wooden ones) and pipers were abundant in London

MAIN: A vision of Cheapside in Elizabethan times – but perhaps cleaner than it actually was





lifetimes. One was the introduction of chimneys; the second was the shift from rough straw mattresses to featherbeds and pillows; and the third change was from wooden tableware to pewter platters and metal spoons.

Clearly, if you want to know what it was really like living and working in Elizabethan England, you need to look beyond the great icons of the age and experience the sounds and smells. You need to *feel* the past, with all your senses.

BUSY METROPOLIS

Imagine walking through the streets of London on a bright spring day, with the streets full of people travelling to and from market – some servants in their aprons, some women with baskets on their heads. Criers are all around calling you to buy their wares, such as onions, sausages or lavender. Bells ring out on the hour from every church tower. Carters shout at pedestrians and each other as they try to manoeuvre their horse-drawn vehicles between the narrow pinch-points of the streets, with the houses' upper storeys leaning out over the road, darkening the way.

Blacksmiths are particularly loud at their work, with the banging of their anvils. And passing an alehouse, you might well hear the sound of bagpipes, as people dance and sing within.

According to the satirist Stephen Gosson, writing in 1580: "London is so full of unprofitable pipers and fiddlers that a man can no sooner enter a tavern than two or three of them hang at his heels to give him a dance ere he depart."

Places where people conglomerate always tend to smell, and Elizabethan London is no exception. The narrow alleys stink with the urine and refuse chucked out into the streets. In fact, many houses are difficult to approach



ABOVE: Craftsmen caused a racket in towns, like armourers hammering metal

ABOVE LEFT: An engraving depicts women selling their fish at a market

RIGHT: Examples of 16th-century leather, the manufacture of which was stinky work



“HOUSES ARE DIFFICULT TO APPROACH DUE TO THE DUNGHILL OUTSIDE THE FRONT DOOR”

due to the dunghill that sits outside the front door. Inside, most town houses' latrines empty straight into the basement, so the smells waft throughout the ground floor – despite the herbs in the rushes strewn over the floor, which

are supposed to sweeten the atmosphere. Men are regularly castigated for urinating in fireplaces, so there is a good chance that more than just the ground floor will carry an unwelcome aroma.

Leatherworkers and tanners carry on their stinking businesses alongside butchers and fishmongers, combining to make an especially pungent atmosphere. Every house burns wood for heating and cooking, so the smell of woodsmoke is ▶

Away from the castles and estates, most Elizabethan homes were limited to one central, and smoky, room with a hearth



◀ everywhere. Given all the other smells, that is something perhaps for which you should be thankful.

Entering an ordinary house in a village will similarly challenge your senses. In this case, it won't be the smells so much as the darkness. Before the advent of the chimneys mentioned in Harrison's *Description of England*, most houses are single storey buildings of two or three rooms, heated by a central hearth in the middle of the living area, or hall. The unglazed windows are small to minimise drafts that bring in the cold and make the smoke swirl around the room.

In winter, people might only be at home during darkness hours, when the only illumination is the glow of the fire and the small flame of a rushlight: a reed soaked in animal fat and suspended on a metal frame while it burns. Even after chimneys appear and fires are larger and set back in a fireplace against a wall, ordinary houses are dark. People don't leave lights burning due to the cost and the danger of setting fire to the building. Hence, they don't look around their

home so much as feel their way.

As you go up the ranks of society, the more chambers and glazed windows you'll find in people's houses, and the more candles and servants. Among the gentry, you'll see upstairs bedrooms with fireplaces, elaborately carved four poster beds, pillows, valances, curtains, mirrors and chamber pots.

DISPARITY OF WEALTH

Just a glimpse of this contrast in domestic arrangements will tell you how much hierarchy matters in Elizabethan society. Among the poor it is rare you will see a book, while the wealthy own dozens as well as paintings, glassware and clocks. Brightly coloured clothes and bed drapes are similarly an extravagance as the necessary dyes are expensive. A rich person might own as much as £1,000 of silverware at a time when a single spoon costs less than 3 shillings.

Nowhere is the disparity of wealth more evident than in food. Spices are

“A LARGE PIKE COSTS 10 SHILLINGS, MORE THAN 30 TIMES A LABOURER'S DAILY WAGE”



ABOVE: A reconstruction of an Elizabethan kitchen at Kentwell Hall, Suffolk – but only the type commonly seen in wealthy homes

obviously more commonly found in the kitchens of the wealthy, as they are imported from the Far East. But meat is also expensive, as is fish even if it is farmed in a freshwater pond. One large pike might cost 10 shillings – more than 30 times a labourer's daily wage.

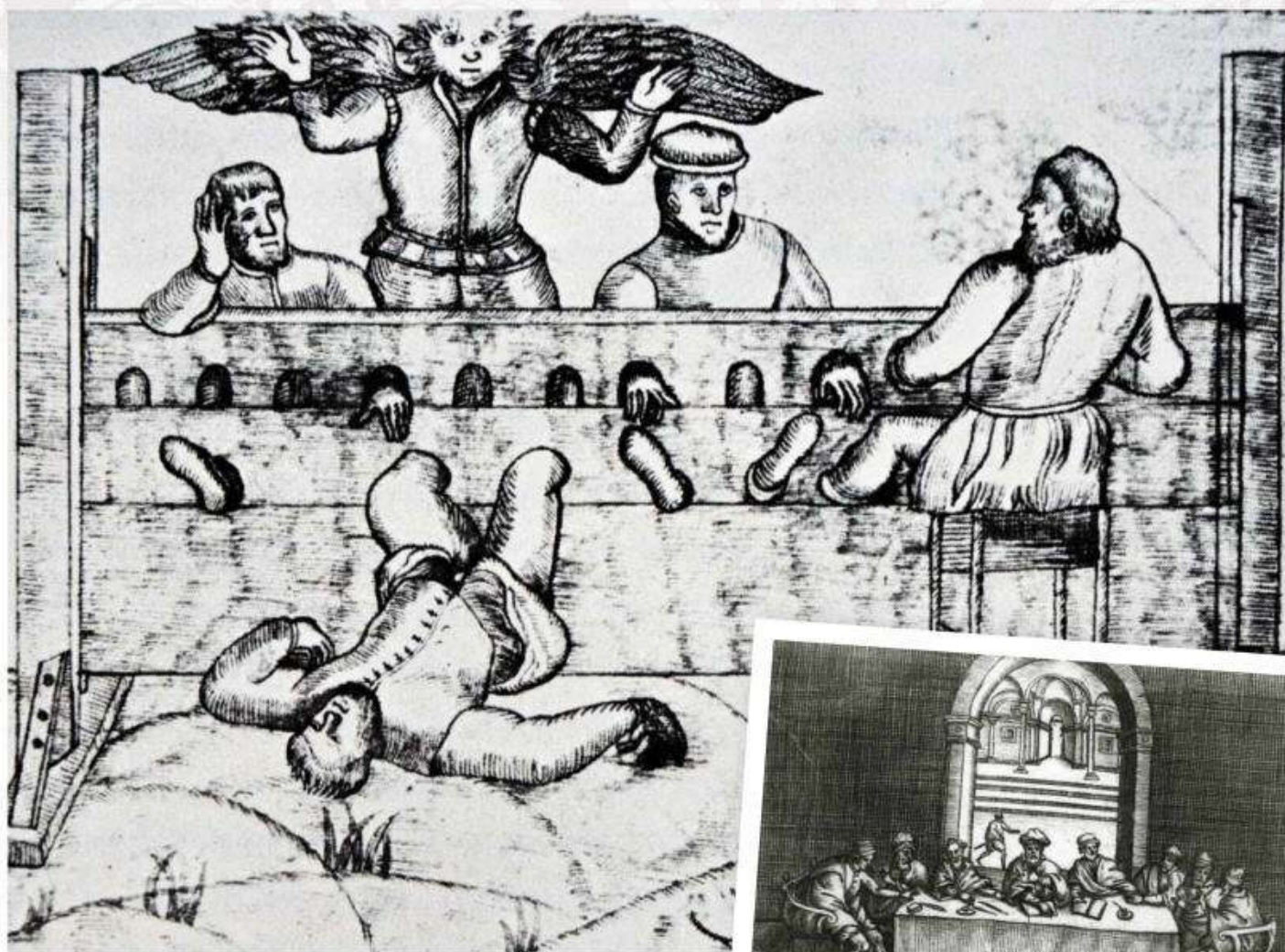
As a result, the wealthy might sit down to a two-course meal comprising a dozen dishes in each course, including roast beef, lamb, pork and a selection of more than a hundred types of fish and almost as many birds, washed down with wines imported from France and Spain. The poor get by on rye bread with a small amount of butter and cheese alongside a pottage of peas, beans and onions, and a mug of ale.

That said, you need to remember that in a bad year there might be an insufficiency of these things. Then the poor really suffer. Bread made from acorns might not be attractive but it might just keep you alive if you and your children are starving. From 1594–97, an enduring famine kills tens of thousands. It is a salutary thought that the last time people died from starvation on this scale in England was during this golden age.

ALL YOU HAVE TO FEAR...

As you can see, all your senses would be shaken by a visit to Elizabethan England. Smells, sounds, sights, feelings and tastes are all different, and these are the most fundamental ways we experience the world. Your sense of decency and care for your fellow human beings is likely to be rocked, and so, too, any sense of fairness.

But the most disturbing sense you will experience on a time-travelling visit will be that of fear. The anxieties many of us face in the modern world are



ABOVE: A woodcut shows criminals being punished in the stocks (plus a winged beast, for good measure)

RIGHT: An engraving depicts the torture of Jesuit priest Edmund Campion. He was hanged, drawn and quartered in 1581 – one of dozens of men killed for religious treason during Elizabeth's reign



nothing compared to the reasons Elizabethans have to be scared. Plague regularly spreads in towns, killing in huge numbers. The larger the town, the larger the proportion of the population that die. A place like Coventry or Exeter with 6,000 to 8,000 inhabitants might see 13 per cent die in an outbreak, but London, with 200,000 people by 1603, can see around a fifth of its population perish in a few weeks. Life expectancy does touch 40 in Elizabeth's reign – the highest it has been but it doesn't get higher than that and won't until the 19th century.

Another reason to be fearful is the draconian property laws. Anyone found stealing more than a shilling's worth of goods faces the death penalty. As for religious crimes, heretics are still burnt at the stake. Crimes against the state are just as serious: even ordinary people who simply talk about the queen's right to rule can be drawn to the gallows, where they are hanged, beheaded and then cut **into quarters as traitors.**

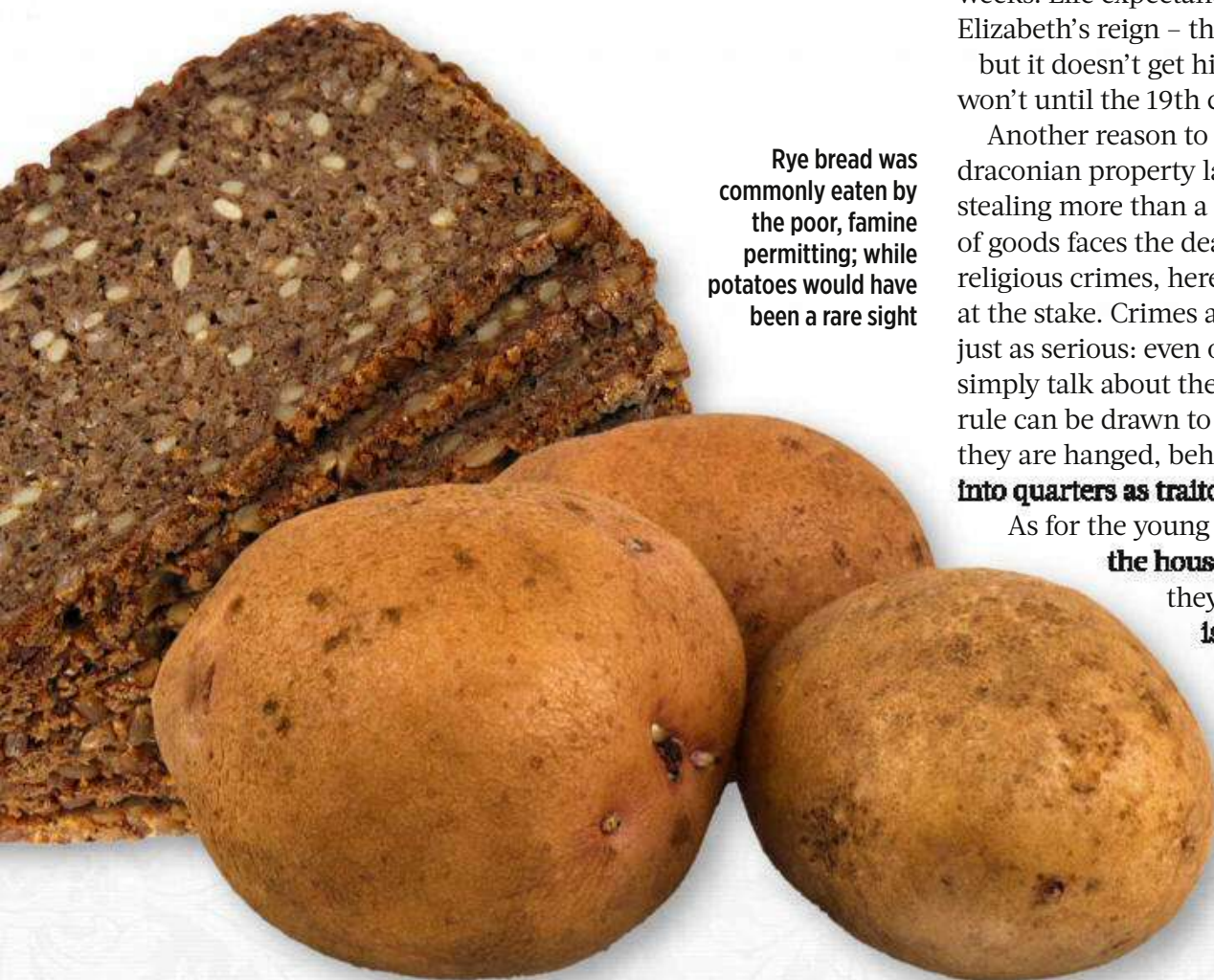
As for the young people serving in **the houses of the wealthy,** they too live in fear. It **is assumed that boys** will be beaten for their own good **and that girls** will be sexually assaulted by **the master of the house or his sons. If the girls**

fall pregnant they will be dismissed in disgrace. Few options are open to them after that. If they kill their unwanted baby, they will be hanged for the crime.

Stop! You might be saying, I don't want to go back to such a time. And well might you think that way. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that England's golden age is much more than a land of great plays, military heroes and dashing seadogs. It is a land beset by fear, disease, inequality and starvation.

But that, I think, only serves to underline the greatness of the English in the late 16th century. Our ancestors did not just survive these adversities, they transcended them. They became confident and ambitious despite them, and accomplished the amazing things that we still associate with them today. 📍

DR IAN MORTIMER is a historian, broadcaster, historical novelist and bestselling author. His books include *The Time Traveller's Guide to Elizabethan England* (Viking, 2013)

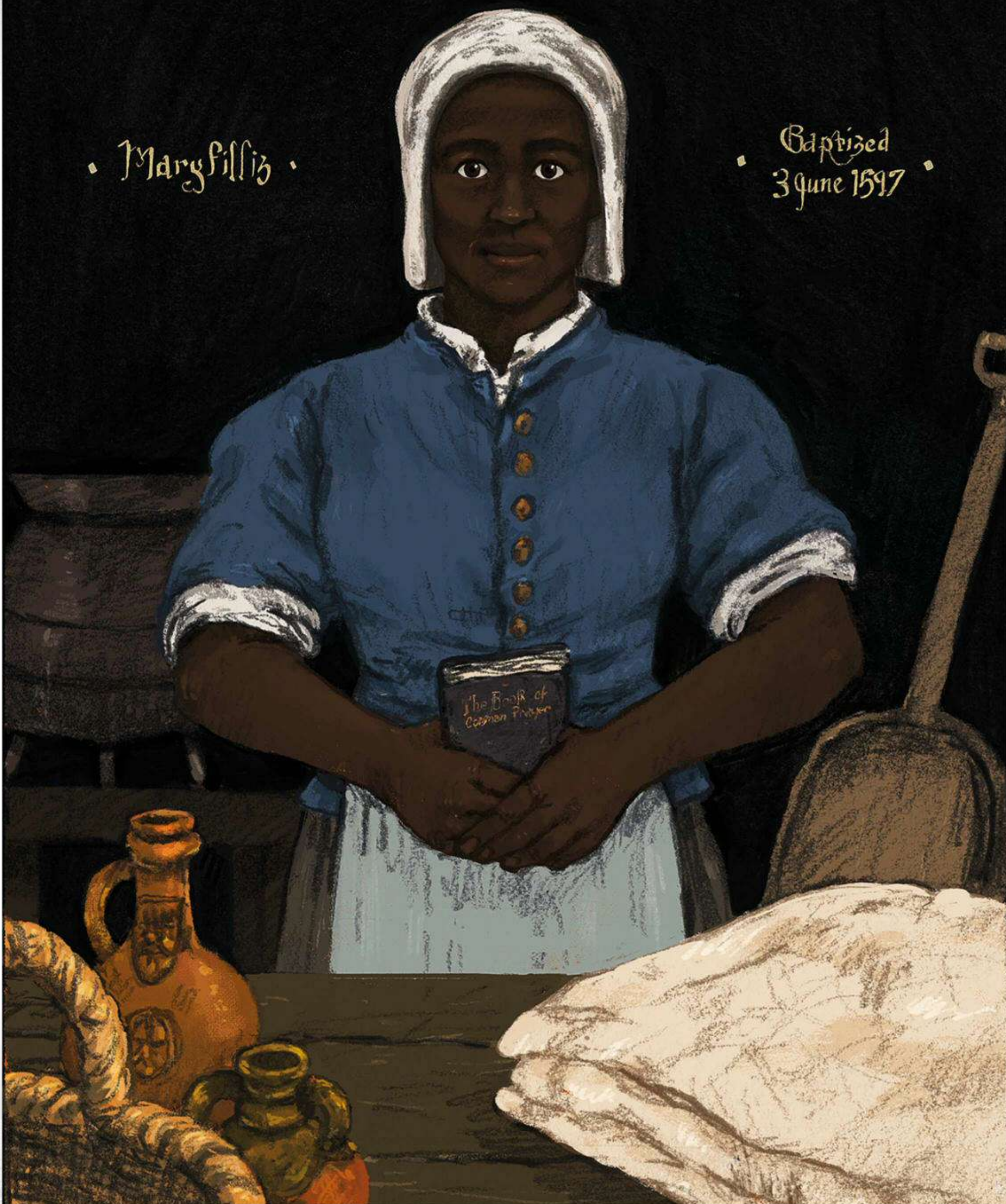


Rye bread was commonly eaten by the poor, famine permitting; while potatoes would have been a rare sight

Mary Fillis, a "black more" from Morocco, was one of several Africans baptised in Elizabethan England

• Mary Fillis •

• Baptized
3 June 1597 •



LOST ELIZABETHANS: THE AFRICANS WHO LIVED IN ENGLAND

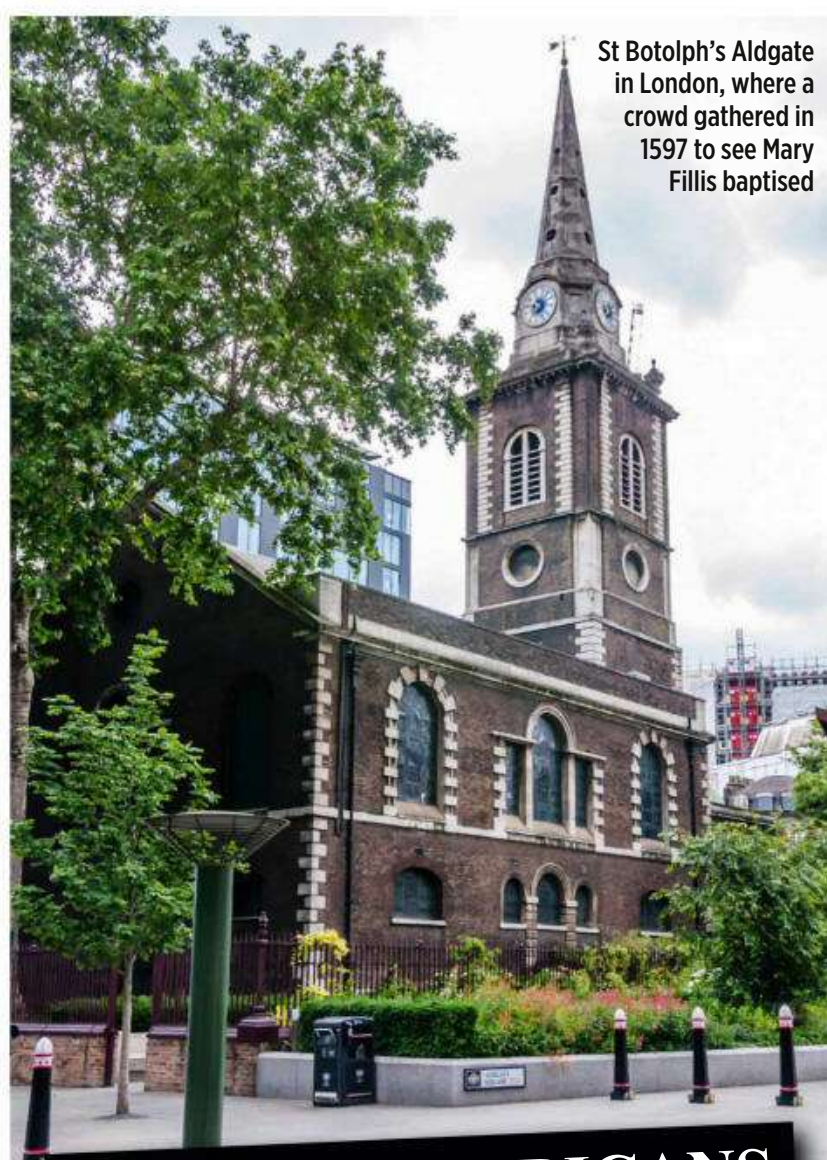
Kerry Apps and Sophie Merrix delve into the archives to find the black men and women who lived under Elizabeth's rule

The church of St Botolph's Aldgate sits in a busy part of the City of London, just north of the infamous royal fortress, the Tower. There, on 3 June 1597, a crowd of local men and women gathered, not for the usual Sunday service – it was a Friday – but a different kind of baptism not regularly seen in Elizabethan England. It was not for a child, but a 20-year-old black woman named Mary Fillis. It is thanks to parish clerk Thomas Harridance's entry in his memorandum book that we know why Mary's baptism was deemed special enough to draw a crowd.

Born in Morocco in 1577, she had come to live in London and worked in the house of the merchant John Barker and then the dressmaker Milicent Porter. After 13 or 14 years in the English capital during her time with Porter, Mary took the step of converting to Christianity. We cannot know what lay behind her decision to leave behind the Islam of her youth, but there are a few definite we can draw from her story. Morocco was not as foreign to the Elizabethans as might be believed, since treaties and trade existed between the two countries. Secondly, we know that Mary was not alone in her experiences.

ABUNDANT ARCHIVES

Mary's baptism was one of 22 such conversions in the Elizabethan period and, beyond that, she was one of numerous people of African descent who made Elizabethan England their home. Abundant archival evidence proving that some 200 Africans lived under the reign of the Virgin Queen has recently been unearthed by pioneering scholars, most prominently Professor Imtiaz Habib, Dr Onyeka Nubia and Dr Miranda Kaufmann. More than living in England, the testimony of parish registers,



St Botolph's Aldgate in London, where a crowd gathered in 1597 to see Mary Fillis baptised

**“SOME 200 AFRICANS
LIVED UNDER THE
REIGN OF THE
VIRGIN QUEEN”**

household accounts, wills, tax returns and state papers makes it clear that black people were not enslaved, either; they were paid wages or payments in kind like their white counterparts. Similar evidence detailing the lives of black Stuarts extends well into the 17th century.

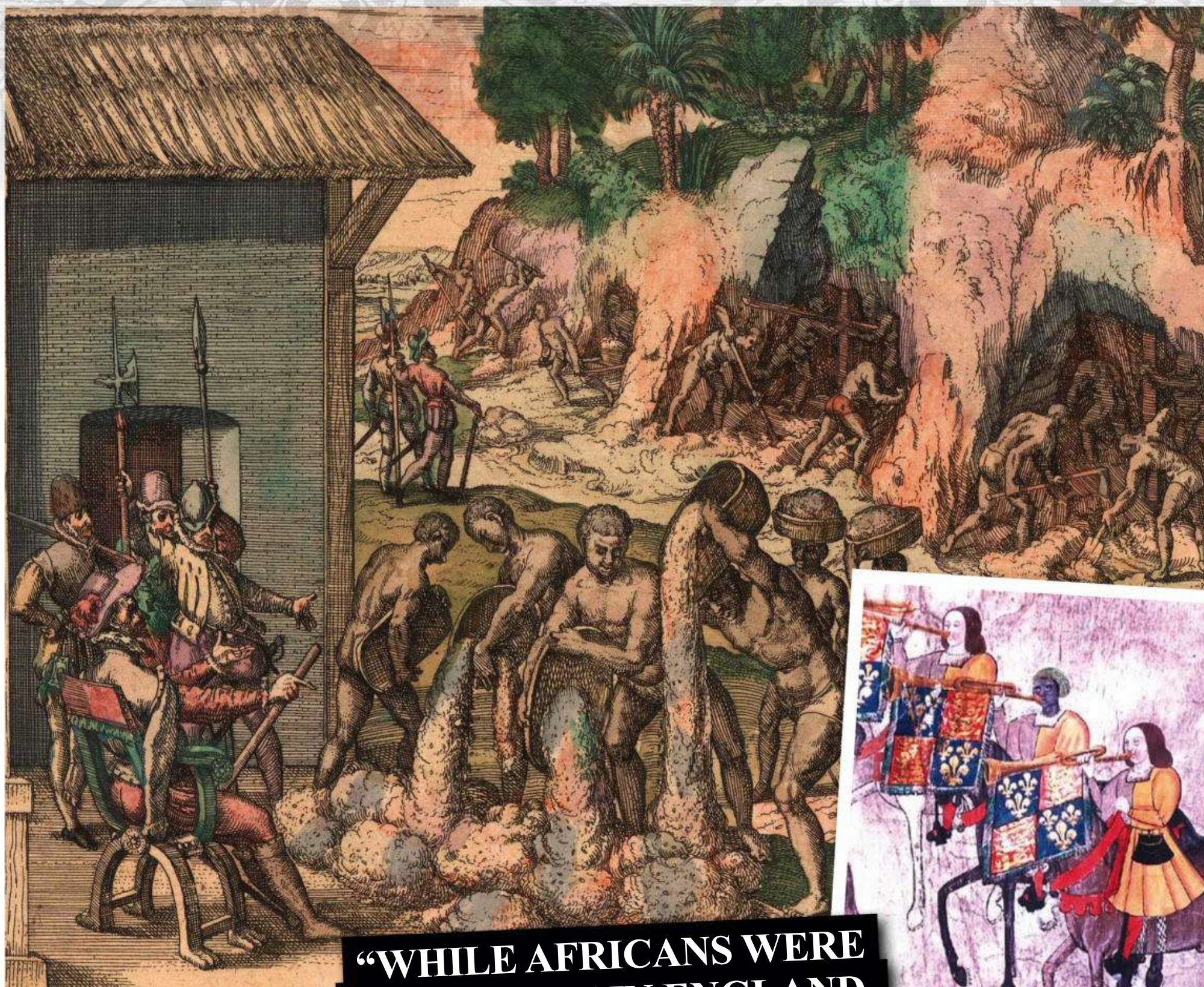
The fact that some African individuals were independent in the early modern period speaks volumes to the relative freedoms they enjoyed. Kaufmann, in her book *Black Tudors: The Untold Story* (Oneworld, 2017), highlights the lives of black people living in Elizabethan England, among them a silk weaver named Reasonable Blackman in the Southwark area of London, and Cattelena of Almondsbury, near Bristol.

The case of Cattelena, a single woman referred to as a “negra”, is an important one. Information about her has been uncovered in an inventory that recorded what she owned when she died in 1625. Cattelena owned a cow, and it was by having property and money that allowed her to live independently: possessing belongings, including pots and pans, spoons, a pewter candlestick, bedding and clothing; being able to rent a room, and making a living by selling milk and cheese from her prized cow.

Today, people learning that there were Africans living in Tudor England could too easily jump to the assumption that they would have been ‘owned’ by white people. Records such as those relating to Cattelena challenge this. Far from being property, Cattelena owned property.

OPPORTUNITY IN ENGLAND

Another African in England during Elizabeth's reign was Henri Jetto. In the records, he is described as a “blackamor”, who was baptised as an adult, married and started a family. Before his death in 1627, Jetto wrote his own will, which is one of the oldest known written by an African in England. Only after his wife's death do we find out another important fact about Jetto's life: he was a yeoman, someone who could vote in local elections and affect the day-to-day running of his parish. His experience shows that Africans weren't excluded



“WHILE AFRICANS WERE PAID WAGES IN ENGLAND, SLAVERY WAS INTRODUCED IN THE COLONIES”

◀ from such positions even in cases where it was likely that they had not been born in England.

It is important to place this in the context of the rest of the world at the time; to understand what life was like for black people outside of England. Shortly after the reign of Elizabeth, while Africans were still paid wages in England to serve white masters, black slavery was introduced in the first English colonies in North America, such as Virginia and Barbados. Harsh laws to stop them from marrying, owning property and living independently, and allowing a wide range of cruel physical punishments, were soon put in place.

These laws, ‘slave codes’, were made in order to subordinate increasing numbers of Africans that the white minority depended on for their labour. For having differently coloured skin, Africans were condemned to hereditary enslavement in

the American colonies (later, the United States), while such laws were not passed in England. Other European countries like Portugal, France and Spain did have legal frameworks for enslaving Africans, some dating back to the 15th century.

RELIGION OVER RACE

Looking back at England, historians Onyeka Nubia and Miranda Kaufmann agree that class and religion mattered more than skin colour. Nubia mentions two Africans – a “Negro with a cut on his face” (taken from an account of 1586) and Francis Rumbolo (1595) who stood out in English reports due

LEFT: While Africans had relative freedoms in England, they were enslaved by other European powers and in the Americas

RIGHT: A section of the 1511 Westminster Tournament Roll shows a black trumpeter, John Blanke, in the employ of Tudor kings



to their religion rather than their skin colour. Religion was so important to the Tudors that it formed a central part of early modern English identity. Elizabeth was a Protestant and because these two Africans both had Catholic connections, they were a threat to religious peace.

Of the archival records available, baptisms and burial accounts are most linked to religion. These list no fewer than 22 baptisms and 50 burials of black people during the years of Elizabeth’s reign. Records are not only important for historians looking to count the number of Africans in England, but to let us look at various stages of the life of a black Tudor person. Africans were integrated into religious practices and on multiple occasions there is evidence of them demonstrating a voluntary



FIVE FORGOTTEN BLACK ELIZABETHANS FROM THE RECORDS

DIEGO THE CIRCUMNAVIGATOR

◀ Diego entered the service of Sir Francis Drake after fleeing enslavement by the Spanish in Panama in 1572. He was a skilful crew member, acting as an interpreter and broker for an alliance with the Cimarrons (escaped enslaved people). Diego joined Drake's circumnavigation of the world, for which Elizabeth I presented Drake with a jewel (pictured left) featuring the profile of an African man.

EDWARD SWARTHYE THE TRUSTED SERVANT

Edward Swarthy, porter of Sir Edward Wynter, entered the records when he testified in a trial between his employer and a rival family. During proceedings, it was revealed that Swarthy had been tasked by Wynter with whipping John Guye, the future colonial governor of Newfoundland.

REASONABLE BLACKMAN THE PROSPEROUS WEAVER

Reasonable Blackman was a silk weaver based south of the Thames in Southwark. He was possibly a member of the refugee community that had fled from Antwerp in the Netherlands to London. His skills in silk weaving were new to England and would have been the height of fashion, putting his work in high demand.

CATTELENA OF ALMONDSBURY THE INDEPENDENT WOMAN

Cattelena of Almondsbury was a "single woman". An independent, unmarried woman in the small Gloucestershire village of Almondsbury, her most valued possession at death was a cow and it is possible she used its produce to support herself. Cattelena is one of a number of Africans who have been found living in rural villages in counties such as Cornwall, Kent, Suffolk and Wiltshire.

HENRI JETTO THE YEOMAN

Henri Jetto was baptised in Holt, Worcestershire, as an adult, aged 26. He wrote his own will, which is one of the oldest written by an African in England. This, however, is not the most significant fact about his life. Jetto had been married and in his wife's will it was revealed that he held the rank of "yeoman". An African, therefore, potentially voted in an English election more than a hundred years before historians first presumed.

KERRY APPS is researching for an MPhil in Early Modern History, with a focus on Global and Atlantic World history, at the University of Cambridge

SOPHIE MERRIX is a PhD student and associate lecturer at Lancaster University, researching 'Space, Status and Society: the Lives of Black Stuarts, 1603-1714'. She is also a contributor to the free online FutureLearn Black Tudors course, created by Dr Miranda Kaufmann: futurelearn.com/courses/black-tudors



ABOVE: Another name from the records of the church of St Botolph's Aldgate is Cassango, a merchant's servant

LEFT: Black men and women lived across Europe during the Tudor period: these paintings depict Africans living in Italy (far left) and the Netherlands (left)

desire to engage, such as Mary Fillis, who "was desirous to become a Christian". Her conversion was voluntary and demonstrates her independence as a free woman serving a white mistress. Her baptism at St Botolph's Aldgate on that crowded June day in 1597 would have strengthened her friendships and relationships with neighbours in the parish and beyond.

MORE THAN "FOOTNOTES"

Records also show that white English people wanted to educate Africans about religion prior to their baptism. In 1616, 13 years after Elizabeth's death, a London merchant named Paul Bayning gave his parish priest £10 to continue teaching "my Negro", Anthony, the Protestant faith. Growing work on black Tudor history

proves that, as Nubia writes, Africans aren't and shouldn't be viewed as simply "footnotes in our history", as "they are as much a part of England's story as their employers". Africans lived and worked in England: they were employed in a similar fashion to white English men and women of the time and had similar opportunities to others in Tudor England.

Placing African lives in their social context, paired with dedication to source searching, can produce rich histories of the previously marginalised or omitted. The archival records provide evidence for the lives and experiences of Africans in ways that challenge the popular narratives. Unlike what many may assume, Elizabethan England was a diverse country and the Africans who lived there were not enslaved. 📍

SPANISH SEA POWER

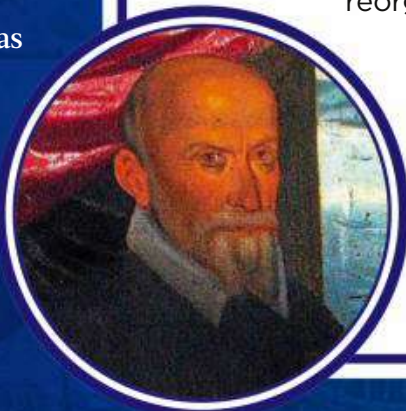
The defeat of Philip II's 'invincible' Armada was arguably the crowning point of Elizabeth's reign

Alongside the battle of Hastings, the Gunpowder Plot and the victory at Waterloo, the defeat of the Spanish Armada has earned its place as one of the most famous events in English – and British – history. From Elizabeth's rousing speech to her troops at Tilbury – *"I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too..."* – to the naval victory at Gravelines, the events of 1588 marked a turning point in the queen's reign. As the remains of Philip II's fleet limped back to Spain, its mission to return England to the Catholic fold thwarted, the victory was interpreted as a symbol of God's favour, inspiring a new wave of nationalism and helping to secure Protestant rule.

Here, we look at some of the key facts about the Spanish Armada and how the action on the high seas played out...

DUKE OF MEDINA SIDONIA

One of Spain's richest men, the Duke of Medina Sidonia was appointed commander of the Armada in February 1588, following the death of the Marquess of Santa Cruz. Inexperienced and lacking in seamanship, with a tendency to suffer from seasickness, his appointment was something of a surprise, including for the duke himself, who tried to turn the position down. Administratively talented, the duke reorganised the fleet and ensured it was well-stocked with food and munitions but proved an indecisive leader in battle. Nevertheless, he made it back to Spain alive.



LORD HOWARD OF EFFINGHAM

A cousin of Elizabeth I, Lord Howard of Effingham was made lord admiral of England in 1585 and was therefore in command of the Royal Navy when the Spanish attacked three years later. Despite little experience at sea, Effingham proved a shrewd leader, deferring to his second in command, the experienced seaman Sir Francis Drake, and his third in command, pioneering naval reformer John Hawkins, when necessary. Effingham was later part of the successful assault on the Spanish port of Cádiz in 1596.



BIG NUMBERS

130

The estimated number of ships in the Spanish fleet, including about 40 warships



100

The estimated number of vessels in the English fleet

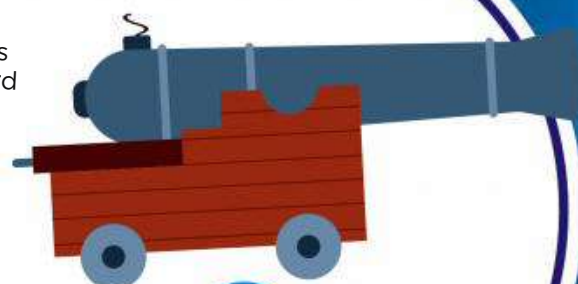


30,000

The approximate number of soldiers and sailors on board Spanish ships

2,000

The number of large cannons deployed by the Spanish fleet



**1
MILLION**

The amount, in gold ducats, promised by Pope Sixtus V in support of Philip II and his Armada



15,000

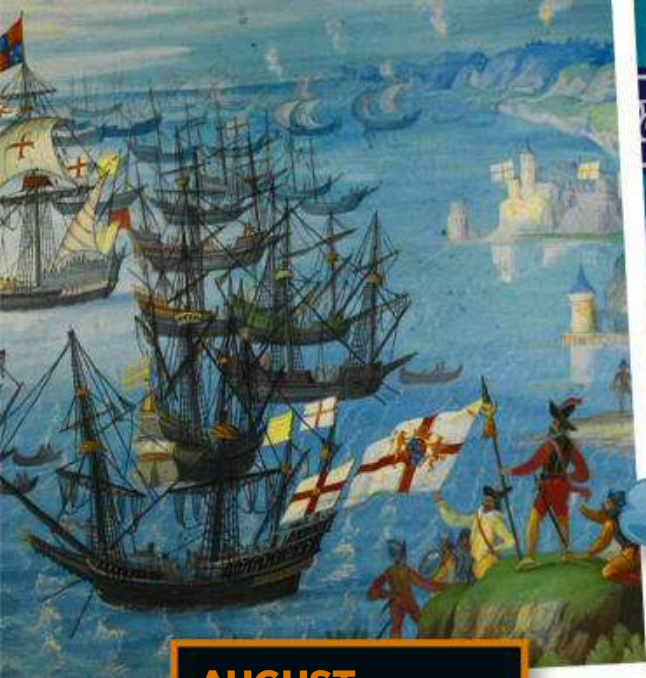
The estimated number of Spanish losses by the time Philip II's fleet made it back to Spain



2.5

The average speed, in knots, at which the Armada could sail with favourable winds





A painting depicts the Spanish Armada being attacked by fireships off the south coast of England

AUGUST

The returning Armada is battered by storms around Scotland and Ireland. Some ships founder in the open sea, while others are driven onto the west coast of Ireland and wrecked.

SEPTEMBER 1588

Battered and broken, only 65 ships reach Spain, many too badly damaged for repair, and with the loss of as many as 15,000 lives.

19 JULY

The Spanish fleet is sighted off the Lizard peninsula in Cornwall. The news is conveyed to London by a fast ship and beacons are lit along the south coast to spread the warning.

21 JULY

Despite finding themselves outnumbered, the English navy engages the Spanish fleet from a safe distance using long-range guns.

12 JULY

The Spanish Armada sets sail from Spain, headed for the English Channel.

28-29 JULY

Having been pursued up the Channel, the Spanish anchor off Calais, waiting for their army to arrive from Flanders. At midnight on 28 July, eight English ships are set alight and sent towards the Armada, causing the fleet to break and scatter.

29 JULY

At dawn, the English fleet engages the Armada off Gravelines, battering the Spanish ships and causing substantial damage.

30 JULY 1588

A shift in the wind direction and the English fleet prevents the Armada from joining with the land forces of the Duke of Parma in the Netherlands. It sets a course for Spain around the northern tip of Scotland.



The Galeón Andalucía – a modern replica of an old Spanish galleon, like those that sailed as part of the Armada

THE BIRTH OF AN EMPIRE

Diplomacy, exploration – and a desire to beat the Spanish – enabled England to become a major player on the world stage



The defeat of the Spanish Armada was a high point in Elizabethan foreign policy

During Elizabeth I's time on the throne, England took its first tentative steps to becoming a global power. Over the previous centuries, the nation's foreign policy had very much been focused on its own little corner of western Europe and its interactions with its Scottish, Scandinavian and French neighbours. By the second half of the 16th century, however, an intrepid band of settlers, explorers and merchants were peering over the horizon and setting their sights on more distant climes, such as southeast Asia and North America.

Europe remained front and centre of Elizabethan foreign policy, but the country's future status as an imperial power would ultimately spring from the English men and women who were prepared to voyage to the outer limits of the known world...

SPAIN

Stormy weather and plucky resistance forced a huge armada into an ignominious retreat back across the English Channel, with thousands of men lost in the operation along with many of the ships. However, the estimated 15,000 men who perished weren't Spaniards, but Englishmen. The year was 1589, and the monarch left to count the cost of this epic maritime fiasco wasn't Philip II of Spain, but Elizabeth I of England.

For 434 years, the English triumph over the Spanish Armada has dominated histories of Elizabeth's relationship with Spain. But as proven by the calamity that befell England's so-called 'Counter-Armada' just a year later – when the English looked to capitalise on their victory by attempting to destroy the Spanish fleet on the country's northern coast – the Tudor queen didn't have things her own way.

The Counter-Armada was one in a long line of dust-ups between England and

Spain during Elizabeth's reign, but relations could have been so different. In 1559, shortly after she acceded the throne, Philip II proposed to the Protestant Elizabeth with a view to ensuring that her nation remained in the Catholic fold. Elizabeth demurred, so Philip looked to France for a wife and, from then on, Anglo-Spanish relations took a nosedive.

By the 1580s, those relations had hit rock bottom. This was thanks, in no small measure, to English privateer Sir Francis Drake, who plundered Spanish galleons for their treasure on both sides of the Atlantic. It was partly due to Drake's exploits that Philip launched his armada against England in 1588. The invasion attempt failed, of course, but a year later the Spanish would have their revenge.

Elizabeth had this majestic portrait done to honour her 1588 victory

Philip II was down, but he would restore Spanish naval power

DID YOU KNOW?

BEYOND THE PALE

During the Middle Ages, England gained control over an area of eastern Ireland known as the Pale. The Tudors sought to expand this territory further, but faced numerous rebellions from the Gaelic Irish, supported by fellow Catholic powers in Europe.

ISLAMIC STATES

Elizabeth received a letter in the spring of 1579 hailing her as a “noble prince” and “most wise governor of the causes and affairs of the people”. That the queen of England should be showered in praise by a gushing admirer isn’t particularly surprising. What *is* surprising is the identity of the man behind the rapturous missive: Murad III, sultan of the Ottoman empire.

Christian Europe and the Islamic states of the east had been at loggerheads throughout much of the Middle Ages as they wrestled for control of the Holy Land during the Crusades. In the 16th century, the prevailing view in Christendom was that Muslims were heretics.

Elizabeth saw things differently. She cast her eyes to the Ottoman and Persian empires in the east and the Saadi Sultanate in West Africa, and saw opportunities. The first was a diplomatic one: to build a powerful Protestant-Islamic bulwark against a common

Catholic enemy. The second was financial – to tap into one of the world’s most lucrative trading networks.

By 1570, English merchants were importing goods worth £28,000 a year from Islamic nations. Soon, English diplomats were heading east in the merchants’ footsteps, among them William Harborne, who helped establish a string of English trading posts across the Mediterranean. Exotic pearls, diamonds, sapphires, silks, rugs, carpets, embroideries and pottery were soon adorning the homes of wealthy Elizabethans, thanks to one of 16th-century Europe’s most unlikely alliances.

The Ottoman emperor Murad III was an unlikely (and flattering) ally of Elizabeth I



“ELIZABETH WANTED TO BUILD A BULWARK AGAINST A COMMON CATHOLIC ENEMY”

NORTH AMERICA

Why is English the dominant language of the United States, and not Spanish? The answer lies with a group of Elizabethan colonists who sailed across the Atlantic throughout the second half of the 16th century. Their attempts to establish a colony in the New World often met with disease and death, but, ultimately, they laid the foundations for the English dominance of North America.

Elizabethan sailors initially saw the Americas not as a destination in itself, but as an obstruction blocking their

passage to China. By the 1580s, Elizabeth could see the virtue of laying claim to a continent rapidly being gobbled up by the Spanish and Portuguese, and so in 1584 she granted 600 miles of American coastline to Walter Raleigh, which he named Virginia in honour of the ‘Virgin Queen’.

The first attempt at colonisation had to be abandoned within a year, and the early English settlers’ fortunes went from bad to worse. In 1587, some 150 men, women and children established a settlement on Roanoke Island (in modern-day North Carolina), before vanishing. The settlers’ leader, John White, had been forced to sail back to England for supplies soon after arriving in America. When he returned, he found the settlement deserted and could find no trace of what happened to the people.

The fate of this ‘Lost Colony’, which remains a mystery to this day, dealt English aspirations of colonising North America a near fatal blow. But not quite. The English finally established a permanent colony in Virginia with the settlement of Jamestown in 1607. Elizabeth may have been dead by now, but her dream of establishing an outpost in North America was just about alive.

ABOVE: A statue of Walter Raleigh, in the North Carolina city named after him

BELOW: The baptism of the first child born to English parents in America – one of the ‘Lost Colony’



“IT TURNED OUT THAT ENGLAND AND FRANCE’S RELATIONSHIP WAS OFTEN DEFINED BY COOPERATION”



FRANCE

England and France should have been at one another's throats throughout Elizabeth's reign. France was one of Europe's most powerful Catholic nations, while England had suddenly and dramatically returned to the Protestant fold. And with England still smarting at the recent loss of Calais to the French, the two nations appeared the most natural of enemies.

There were tensions between the two – especially since the French supported the claim of Mary, Queen of Scots to

the English throne – but it turned out that their relationship was often defined by cooperation. A reason for that: the growing power of Spain. Elizabeth wasn't the only monarch disconcerted by the belligerence of Philip II, as France's rulers were also eager to neuter the power of their great neighbour and rival to the south. So much so that, in the late 1570s, Elizabeth persuaded the duke of Anjou to send French troops to the Netherlands in order to assist the Dutch rebellion against the Spanish.

The Dutch Provinces, represented by a cow being ridden by Philip II of Spain, against whom they were revolting, are aided by Elizabeth (with French help in the form of the Duke of Anjou, who holds the cow's tail)

If that was an unlikely diplomatic coup, even more surprising was the queen's friendship with French king Henry III, a devout Catholic who had once labelled Elizabeth a “public whore”. Despite this unpromising beginning, Henry came to rely on Elizabeth's advice in negotiating the challenges presented by his domestic enemies. By the end of his reign, Henry was writing that he found “more kindness in his good sister the queen of England than in all the princes, his friends and allies besides”.

THE EAST INDIES

Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh are among the most celebrated explorers in the long span of English history. And Sir James Lancaster? Well, he hardly gets a look-in. This 16th-century merchant and adventurer may not be a mainstay of the Elizabethan history books, but he had commanded a ship against the Spanish Armada and his later journeys to the East Indies would lay the foundations for one of the most extraordinary feats of empire-building in human history.

Lancaster was at the vanguard of attempts during the Elizabethan era to break the Spanish monopoly of the spice trade that flourished with the islands and coastlines of the Indian Ocean. In April 1591, he voyaged east aboard the *Edward Bonaventure*, reaching the island of Penang, west of the Malay peninsula, in June 1592 and plundering every ship he encountered. Yet it was Lancaster's next voyage – leaving Torbay in April 1601 on the *Red*

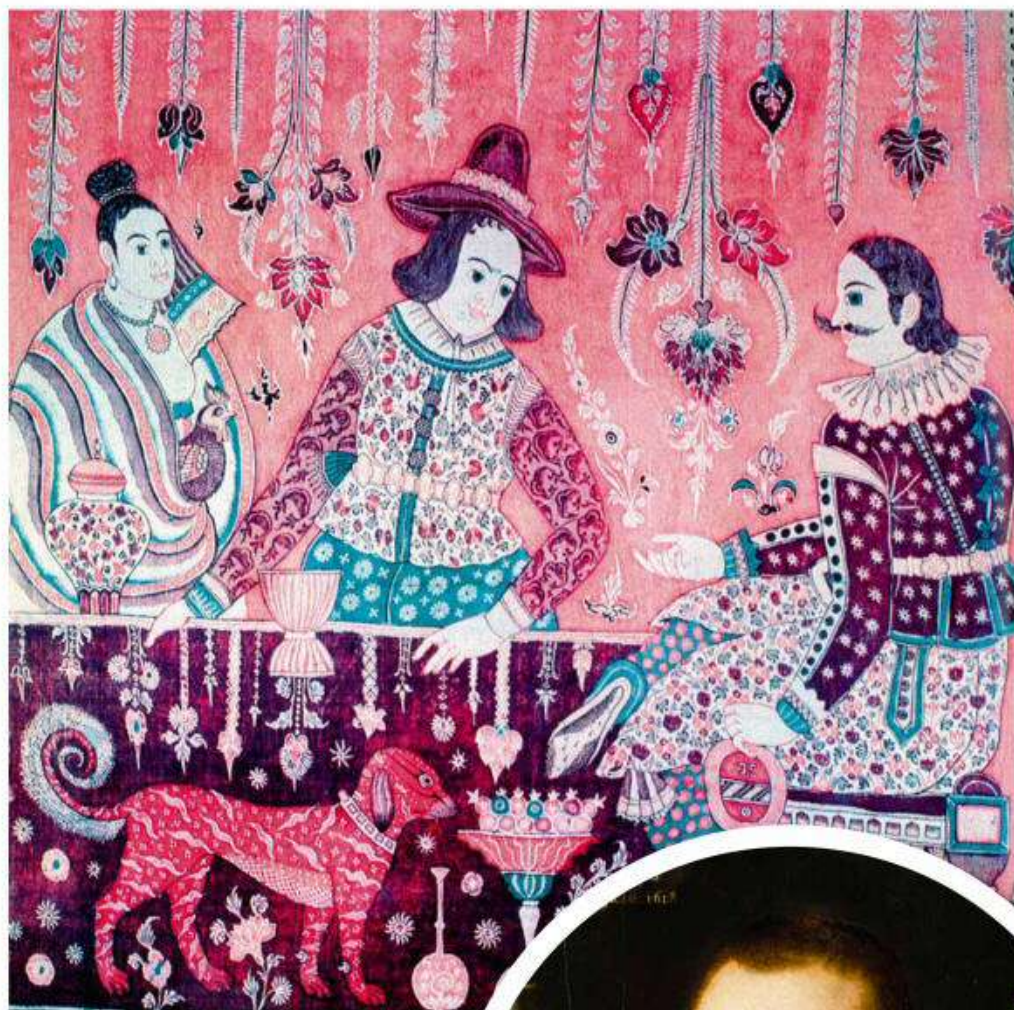
Dragon – that did most to change the course of history.

Elizabeth had appointed him commander of the East India Company's first-ever fleet and charged him with establishing a series of trading posts along the coastlines of southeast Asia. Lancaster fulfilled his brief, journeying to places such as Sumatra, the Moluccas and Java, and looting a Portuguese galleon for good measure.

During 1603, Lancaster returned to England and was knighted by Elizabeth's successor, King James VI and I. He would remain a director of the East India Company, which would grow into a powerhouse of the British empire over the following centuries.

DID YOU KNOW?

COMPANY POLITY
The East India Company, which was granted its royal charter by Elizabeth I in 1600, would become so powerful that by the mid-18th century it was involved in around half of the world's trade, held dominion over swathes of India and had its own army.



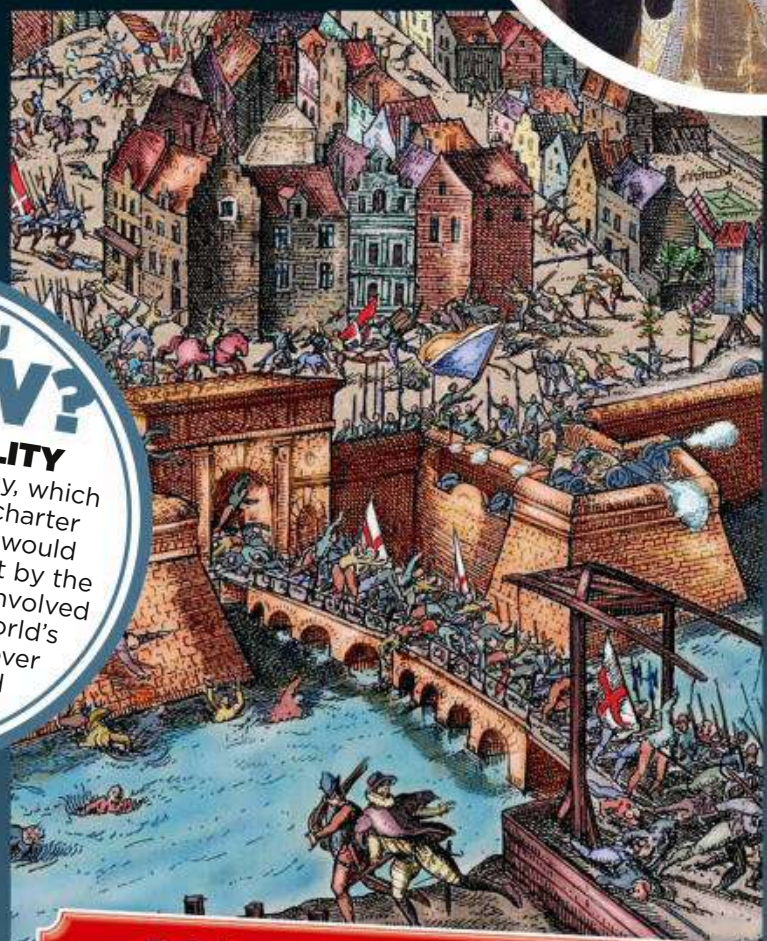
ABOVE: A 16th-century cotton tapestry shows a British trader bartering with an Indian merchant

RIGHT: James Lancaster – a forgotten name in Elizabethan exploration?



RIGHT: Elizabeth I depicted receiving Dutch ambassadors

BELOW: The English-backed Dutch revolt against the Spanish set off the Eighty Years' War



THE LOW COUNTRIES

Elizabeth spent much of her reign pursuing any chance she could to leave her Spanish enemy, Philip II, with a bloody nose. And one of the first times that such an opportunity presented itself centred on the collection of provinces sitting on England's southeastern doorstep, the Low Countries.

By the mid-16th century, a significant proportion of the Dutch population had converted to Protestantism. So far so good, as far as Elizabeth was concerned. But there was a problem: since 1556, the Netherlands had fallen under the sway of the fiercely Catholic Spanish king.

That spelled trouble. In 1568, Dutch resentment at Spanish rule exploded into a huge revolt – and Elizabeth, eager to support her Protestant brethren, couldn't help but get involved. She employed a mercenary army, topped up by around 6,000 England and Scottish volunteers, to support the Dutch rebels. This was the first time that English and Spanish troops had come to blows during the queen's reign.

Following the death of the Dutch rebel leader, William the Silent, Prince of Orange, in 1584, Elizabeth was approached to become 'Lady and Countess of Holland and Zeeland'. She declined, but the fighting went on. She didn't live to see the northern provinces eventually win their independence in 1648. ©

WORDS: SPENCER MIZEN

SETTLING THE RELIGIOUS DIVIDE

The religion of England had see-sawed under the Tudors, says **Susan Ronald**, so Elizabeth wished finally to reach a settlement

Elizabeth I at prayer, from the frontispiece of the 1569 *Christian Prayers and Meditations*



WALKING A TIGHTROPE

Christianity had been splintering into various Protestant forms of worship: Presbyterianism, imported to England by John Knox's Scots; Calvinism from Switzerland; Lutheranism from Germany; Puritanism from the Netherlands; and Huguenot Protestantism from France – all through 'protesting' refugees who looked

to Elizabeth's England for safety. Jewish people, outlawed since the reign of Edward I in 1290, had been trickling back into the realm since the Spanish



LEFT: A stained-glass window of the biblical figure Deborah, to whom Elizabeth I was compared

BELOW: The martyrdom of Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley during Mary I's reign



When Elizabeth Tudor became queen on 17 November 1558, she was hailed as the 'new Deborah' (referring to the biblical prophet and judge of Israel), who would heal a religiously wounded and divided England. Since Henry VIII resolved to annul his marriage to his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, in order that he could marry Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, religious conflict was rife. People

born in 1520 would have changed their religion no fewer than four times by 1559, since all subjects adopted the monarch's religion by law.

Elizabeth's half brother Edward VI (r1547–53) enforced uniform worship with the first Book of Common Prayer, then her Catholic half sister Mary I (r1553–58) decreed that just under 300 Protestant 'heretic' commoners should be burned at the stake. Religion was both a political issue and a matter of life and death.

Inquisition, too. They remained separate and silent from the upheaval, with the largest population located in Bristol. A small community of Muslims (then known as 'Mohammedans' or 'blackamoors') were also remote from the religious conflicts, living mostly in London.

Elizabeth's first act was to ensure a religious settlement that would tame the Protestant 'hot gospellers' or Puritans in parliament. Simultaneously, Catholic members were outraged at the Crown's retaking of the monasteries and chantries revived under Mary I. Then, too, there were objections to Elizabeth, a woman, being head of the Church of England. But shortly after Easter 1559, following much debate and ill feeling, England had a combined Act of Supremacy and Act of Uniformity, and a legitimate queen.

Elizabeth's vision for the Anglican faith was softer than Edward's Lutheranism and equally far removed from Mary's Catholicism. Elizabeth believed that if she wavered in her resolve to find a middle way, a bloody civil war would erupt just as it had in France and the Netherlands. Equally, with England benefitting from the influx of skilled Protestant immigrants from the continent, she hoped to create a more heterogenous society. Even so, Elizabeth knew she had to tread a tightrope of reforming Puritans and Presbyterians on one hand, and her devout Catholic population clinging to the old ways on the other.

Notwithstanding Elizabeth's personal beliefs, religious tolerance was an alien notion to everyone and would remain so until the early 19th century. This made her religious settlement a dream of utopia rather than fact. Although she wanted to make England a more tolerant country where she would, as she allegedly declared in 1586, "not make windows into men's souls", Elizabeth's instinctive solution proved imperfect in practice as much as it was valiant in its inspiration.

VISION OF ENGLISHNESS

Even Elizabeth's steadfast objection to marriage was rooted, in part, in her religious settlement. Suitors of equal rank were either Catholic or foreign, and unable to fathom her vision of Englishness. Mary, Queen of Scots by blood, Elizabeth's nearest relative and devoutly Catholic should have inherited the throne by right if Elizabeth died without having a child. But Mary would become Elizabeth's scourge during her reign, initially as the wife of the heir to the French throne, and later, on her return to Scotland, as the figurehead for plots that the Catholics hoped could forcibly dethrone Elizabeth.

The so-called Elizabethan Settlement of 1559 was hardly the religious middle way Elizabeth had hoped to achieve.

Royal visitations were carried out, ostensibly to strip Catholic altars, demolish rood screens, and overpaint the saintly images with lavish coats of whitewash. Liturgical vestments and ornaments were burned or smashed by Elizabeth's men. The rampant destruction of ornaments, vessels, images and books of Catholic worship were to "deface the realm of all papistry". In cities and the countryside, many became disconsolate.

However, the old ways of Catholicism prevailed without the benefit of their former trappings. An element of pagan magic had crept into English Catholicism, where God's grace could be manipulated for earthly causes. Thomas Cooper, an Elizabethan bishop said: "Chance or fortune are gods devised by man and made



ABOVE: Edward VI, Elizabeth's half-brother, was a devout Protestant

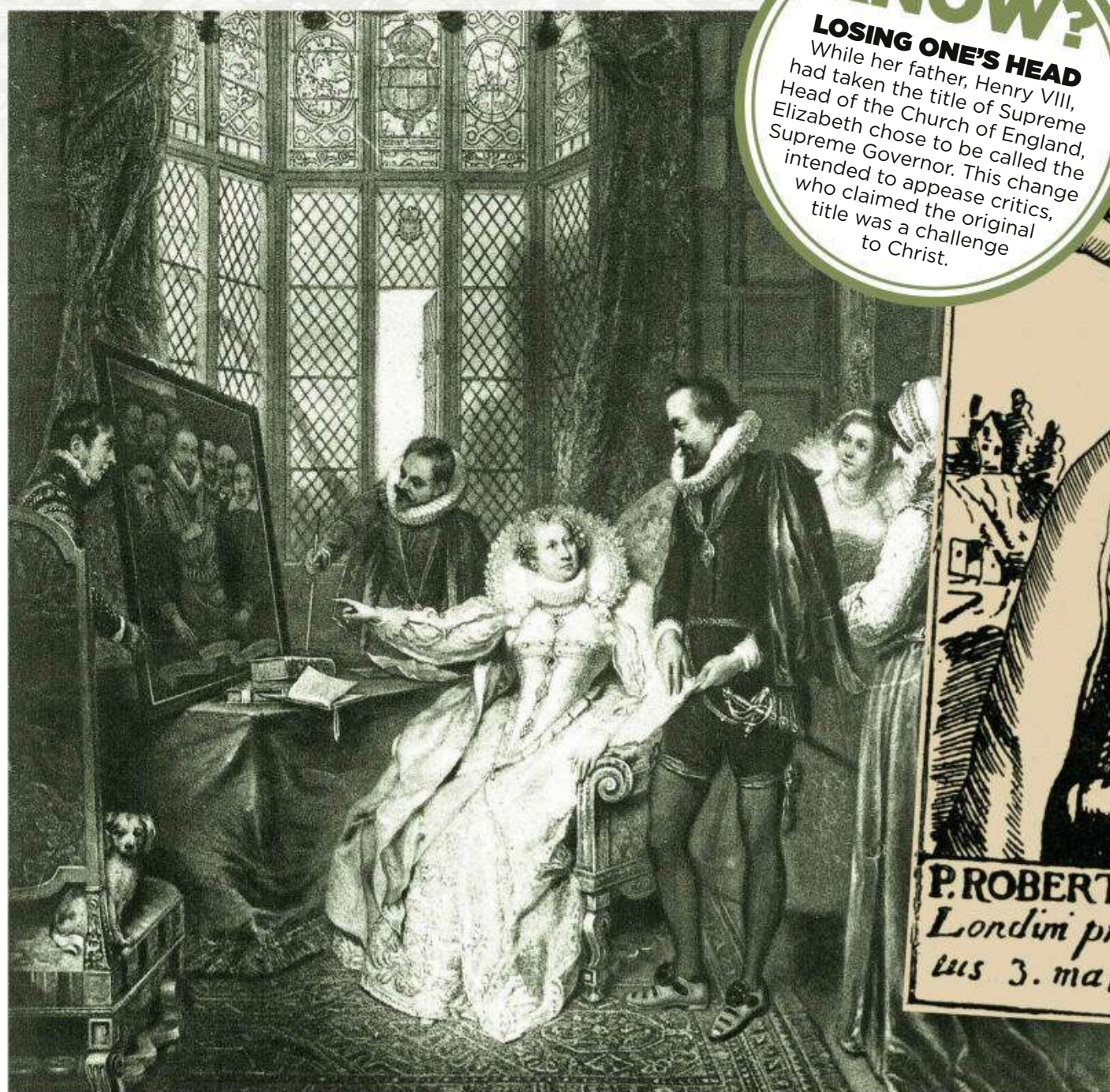
RIGHT: Under Edward, the Book of Common Prayer was published



“ELIZABETH’S RELIGIOUS SETTLEMENT WAS A DREAM OF UTOPIA – AND HARDLY THE MIDDLE WAY IN PRACTICE”



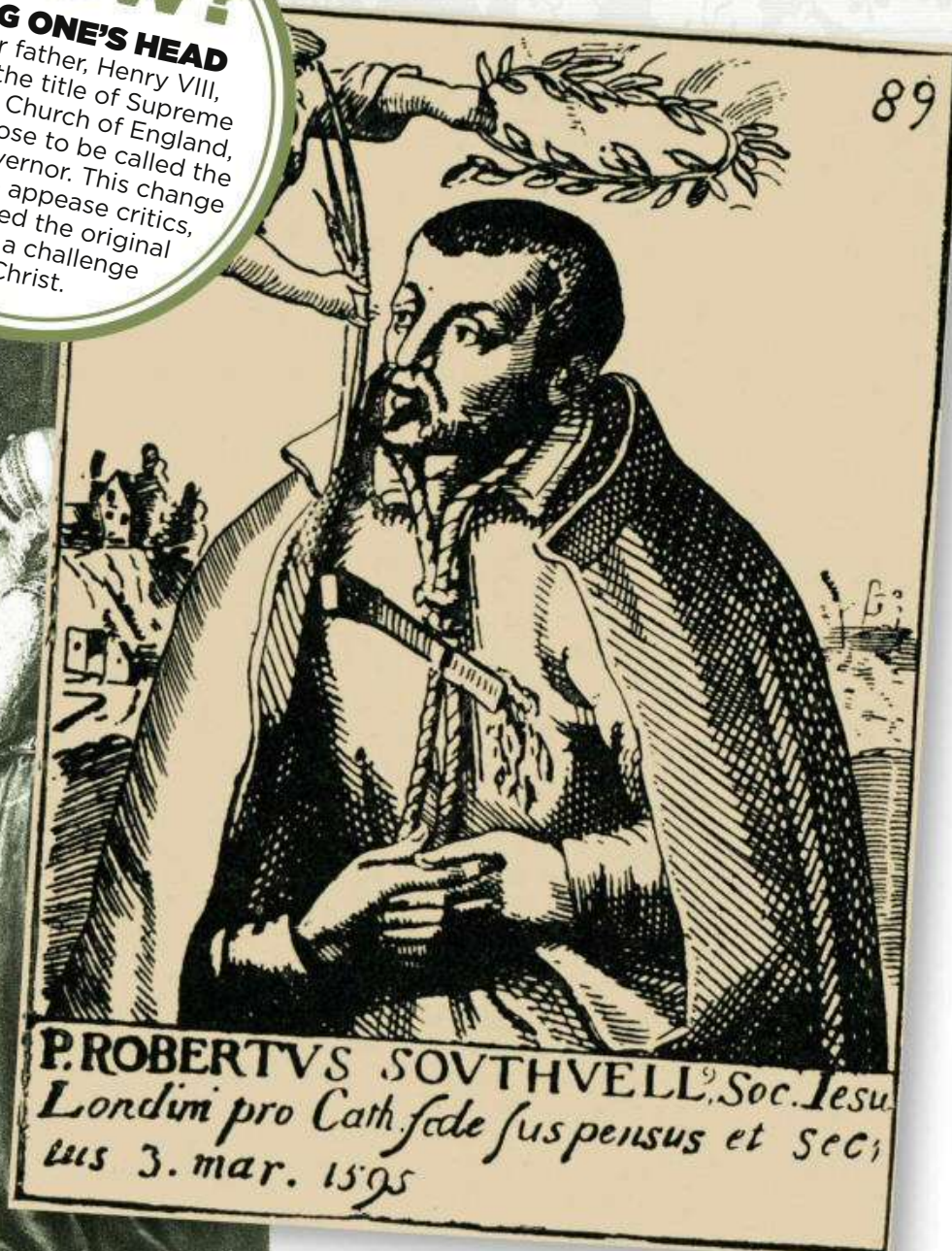
A woodcut from John Foxe's pro-Protestant *Actes and Monuments*, better known as the *Book of Martyrs* depicts the removal of Catholic idolatry from English churches (top scene)



DID YOU KNOW?

LOSING ONE'S HEAD

While her father, Henry VIII, had taken the title of Supreme Head of the Church of England, Elizabeth chose to be called the Supreme Governor. This change intended to appease critics, who claimed the original title was a challenge to Christ.



ABOVE LEFT: Elizabeth is told of the Babington Plot, a Catholic attempt to assassinate her

ABOVE RIGHT: Jesuit priest Robert Southwell was tortured and executed in 1595 after being found guilty of high treason

resources for revolt at times when the papacy, Spain, France, and Scotland variously joined forces to defeat the 'heretic' queen, Elizabeth.

"GOD'S OBVIOUS DESIGN"

By 1570, Elizabeth publicly scorned the more extreme followers of the Protestant faith: the homegrown Puritans, often called 'precisians', 'gospellers', 'scripture men' or 'godly people'. Yet both Catholics and Puritans viewed themselves as 'Christ's soldiers' and were determined to relieve Elizabeth of her crown.

Supporters of Mary, Queen of Scots had raised her standard unsuccessfully against Elizabeth that year, but several noble and common English Catholics still remained loyal to her. The papacy funded a dozen assassination attempts and declared Elizabeth a heretic. Meanwhile, Philip II of Spain began to plot an invasion of England. With each attack on internal English affairs, Elizabeth tightened her grip on her religious and political enemies.

During her 44-year-reign, Elizabeth's ability to keep the peace between the religious factions slipped away. By 1580, both the papacy and Philip II funded the return to England of Jesuit priests to battle against punishment of their fellow

"WITH EACH ATTACK ON INTERNAL ENGLISH AFFAIRS, ELIZABETH TIGHTENED HER GRIP ON HER ENEMIES"

by our ignorance of the true, almighty and everlasting God."

Catholic magic and supernatural miracles were intermingled in the belief systems of the average English person, creating an uneasy alliance between superstition, witchcraft, philosophy, and the 'new' science of medicine. Members of the Anglican clergy would lament how "our common ignorants are besotted" with the opinions of "charmners, fortune-tellers, wizards and cunning men". Any parish worth its salt had its own miracle worker, wise woman, white witch or astrologer to replace the old Catholic mass with its healing power of the saints and their relics.

In response, Elizabeth stated that her population should all learn to read so they could study the new Book of

Common Prayer. For those who were unable or refused to do so then it was read aloud, as was *Actes and Monuments*, a work by John Foxe that told the tales of Protestant martyrs. An unintended consequence was that reading would open other, broader worlds to her people. And so, again, Elizabeth tightened restrictions by making it illegal for Catholics to attend the universities of Oxford or Cambridge.

But the genie was out of the bottle. As Elizabeth's reign progressed, so too did the common peddler or 'chapman', who could be seen trudging along the highways and byways selling ballads and pamphlets known as chapbooks. The ballads were sung to familiar tunes about social ills, reforms or godly works. Later, newer ballads and chapbooks became

Catholics who had become recusants, or those who refused to attend Anglican church services as required by law. Punishments for recusants varied from hefty fines of 20 pounds, to confiscation of their recusant lands, depending on the severity of their crimes. The returning English Jesuit priests, such as Edmund Campion, were not merely preaching the Catholic faith, but also inspired their brethren to rebel against the increasing injustices. Many of these men, including Campion himself, were captured and subsequently martyred.

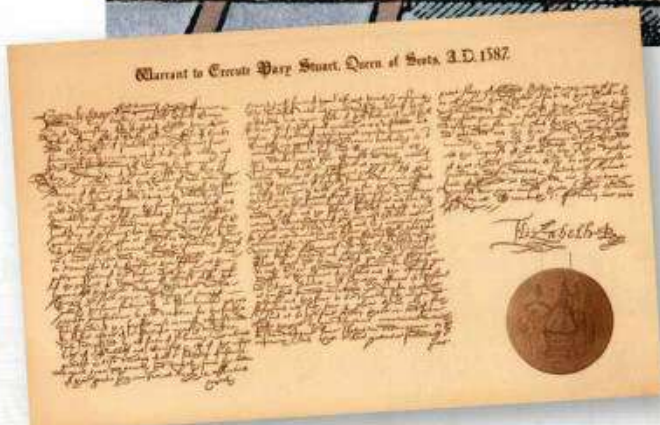
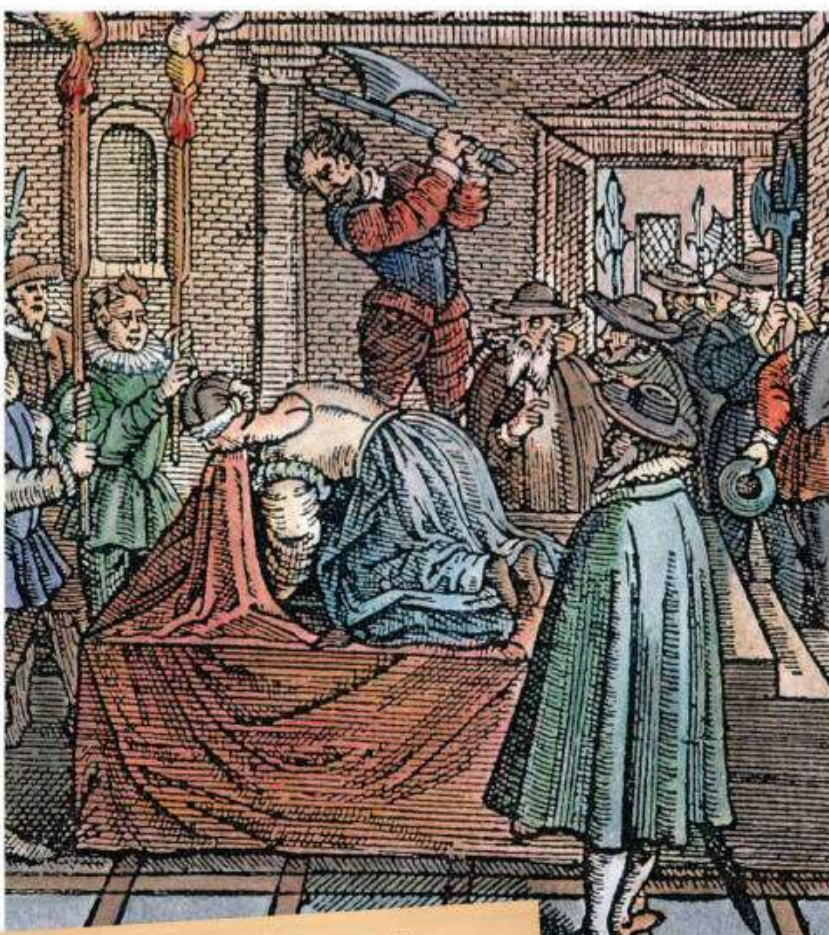
Mary, Elizabeth's prisoner for 19 years, was convicted of treason in late 1586 for continuing to plot her cousin's overthrow. Her execution on 8 February 1587 finally unleashed Philip II's 'great enterprise', the Spanish Armada. With its defeat the following year, Elizabeth proclaimed: "Let tyrants fear. I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and

safeguard in the loyal hearts and good will of my subjects."

For Elizabeth, victory over the Armada signalled "God's obvious design" that she should be England's queen, and her people should follow the Anglican faith. Yet the remaining years of her reign, until March 1603, ended much as it had begun, with political and religious plots that kept England in turmoil.

Interestingly, Elizabeth was seemingly unaware that Mary's son, James VI of Scotland, had been conspiring with her main advisor Robert Cecil since 1601 to be named king of England on her death. When James's name was called out by Cecil as Elizabeth lay dying, she touched her hand to her head, signifying James should be her successor. 

SUSAN RONALD is a historian, biographer and screenwriter. Her works on Elizabeth I include *Heretic Queen* (St Martin's Press, 2012) and *The Pirate Queen* (HarperCollins, 2007)



ABOVE: A figurehead for Catholics looking to oust Elizabeth, Mary, Queen of Scots, is executed in 1587

LEFT: It took several months for Elizabeth to sign her cousin's death warrant

GET HOOKED

If we've whetted your appetite for all things Elizabethan, why not explore the topic further with our pick of books, films and podcasts

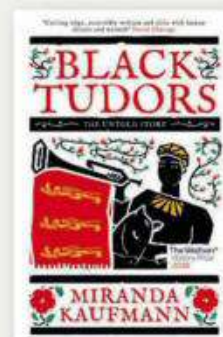
BOOKS



Elizabeth's Rival: The Tumultuous Tale of Lettice Knollys, Countess of Leicester

By Dr Nicola Tallis (Michael O'Mara, 2017)

Cousin to Elizabeth I, Lettice Knollys found herself entangled in a love triangle with Robert Dudley and the Virgin Queen herself. The prominent Elizabethan found herself banished from court, plagued by scandal and embroiled in treason.



Black Tudors: The Untold Story
By Dr Miranda Kaufmann (Oneworld, 2017)

Shortlisted for the 2018 Wolfson History Prize, Kaufmann's book explores the remarkable stories of Africans who lived free in Tudor England – from the Moroccan woman baptised in a London church to the Mauritanian diver who salvaged items from the *Mary Rose*.



The Time Traveller's Guide to Elizabethan England

By Dr Ian Mortimer (Viking, 2013)

Experience a country of contradictions, where life expectancy is in the early thirties and people still starve to death; an era that produces some of the finest writing in the English language, magnificent architecture and sees the circumnavigation of the globe.

ONLINE AND AUDIO

BBC RADIO



► **Elizabethan Subjects** (BBC Sounds): The late Professor Justin Champion examines the life and times of some of Elizabeth I's more unusual subjects, from alchemist John Dee to Elizabethan serial killers. Listen at bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/p00q3pzi



► For podcasts, features, quizzes, interviews and more on Elizabethan England, visit our website: historyextra.com/period/elizabethan

WATCH



Elizabeth: The Golden Age (2007)
(now streaming on Amazon Prime, Apple TV, Google Play and others)

Elizabeth I (Cate Blanchett) takes on the might of Philip II of Spain, who is raising a huge armada, intent on restoring Catholicism to England.



Armada: 12 Days to Save England
(available on DVD)

Historian Dan Snow takes to the sea to tell the story of how England came within a whisker of disaster in the summer of 1588 in this three-part BBC documentary series, originally broadcast in 2015.



**DID YOU
KNOW?**

PET PORTRAIT

Louis Wain's first cat, Peter, was a stray that he adopted with his wife Emily when they heard the black-and-white kitten meowing outside one rainy night. Many of Wain's hundreds of caricatures feature a black-and-white cat in honour of Peter.

LOUIS WAIN

CREATOR OF A “CAT WORLD”

The artist's popular caricatures were not just a cultural phenomenon, says **Nige Tassell**, but changed the way that people viewed cats forever

During the late-19th and early-20th centuries, few artists enjoyed the kind of widespread popularity that Louis Wain did. He was a household name and his works could be found everywhere. His speciality – anthropomorphic cats and kittens with oversized eyes doing human activities from singing songs to playing sports –

adorned postcards, calendars, annuals and biscuit tins. Rare was the household that didn't possess at least one example of Wain's work, and many people were not content unless they had a collection of his feline-based art, including such eminent figures as the novelist HG Wells and the prime minister Stanley Baldwin. Both were great champions of Wain, in particular when the artist was discovered to have been committed to a pauper's asylum in his later years.

That Wain's life didn't trace the kind of trajectory to be expected given the heights of his popularity makes him a fascinating character to study. He is the subject of a new film, *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*, which offers a portrait of the artist as a brilliant but tortured soul. The film's lead, Benedict Cumberbatch, found multiple layers to Wain's personality, writing in his foreword to a new edition of the Chris Beetles book *Louis Wain's Cats* that “to be Louis felt like tuning in to a perpetual voice, sometimes quiet and shy, sometimes channelled into a singular focus, and at other times openly confrontational, a voice saying to the world, ‘But don't you see?!’”

SAFE IN SOLITUDE

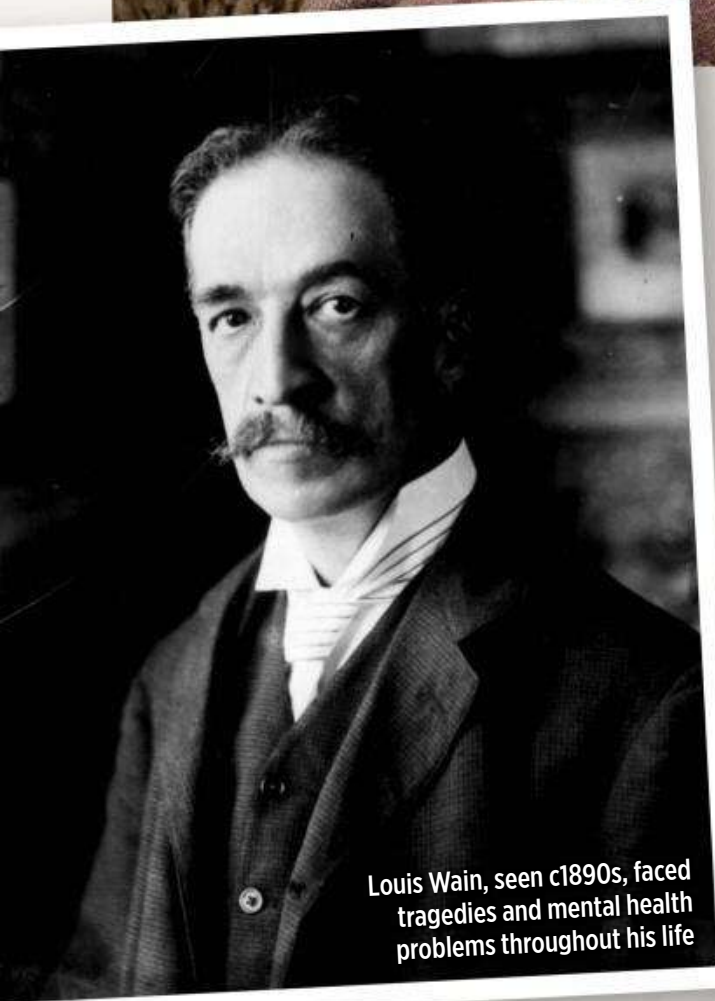
Louis Wain was born in Clerkenwell in central London in 1860, the first of six children of a textile merchant and his French wife. Home life for the Wains was a little unorthodox for the times. Not only did none of his five sisters ever marry, but each of them lived in the family home for their entire lives. Wain himself had been born with a cleft lip and was a sickly boy who experienced frequent

ABOVE: A lover of cats, Wain's wildly popular art rehabilitated the humble moggy's reputation

LEFT: A typically colourful caricature of Louis Wain's of three cats singing (in purr-fect harmony)



Benedict Cumberbatch stars as Louis Wain in a 2021 biopic about the artist, alongside Claire Foy as his wife Emily



Louis Wain, seen c1890s, faced tragedies and mental health problems throughout his life

“The couple took in a stray black-and-white kitten, named Peter, to offer Emily solace and comfort”

discernible career path. In 1877, Wain enrolled at the West London School of Art.

While his early years might have shown him to be someone who didn't quite fit in, his life now appeared to be more settled. That was, until further events would serve to further confuse and set him adrift. In 1880, Wain's father died, leaving the 20-year-old Louis with the responsibility of keeping

his family afloat financially – even though, as would be shown in the years to come, his business sense was far from sophisticated. Perhaps realising this, he took a job as an assistant master at the art school so that he could meet a duty to earn a regular, steady income.

His teaching career lasted but a year. The pull of the life of a working artist had become too strong and he joined the staff of the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, for whom he would draw tranquil scenes of country houses and livestock. This role suited Wain well – he stayed at the magazine for four years – but there was more upheaval to come in his life. At the age of 23, he fell in love with and married his sisters' governess, Emily Richardson. She was 10 years his senior, an age gap that attracted scorn and criticism from certain corners of society. Having moved to Hampstead, the couple only enjoyed a three-year marriage

before Emily died from breast cancer in 1887. Wain, still only in his 20s, had now lost both his father and his wife.

FELINE INSPIRATION

Yet there was a silver lining from Emily's illness, and it was one that would accelerate Wain's artistic impact. To offer some solace and comfort to Emily as her condition worsened, the couple took in a stray black and white kitten, which they named Peter, and Wain started sketching caricatures of their beloved cat in the hopes of cheering her up. Emily always encouraged him to have his drawings published, advice he followed shortly before her death with the publications *Madame Tabby's Establishment* and *A Kittens' Christmas Party*. Wain later acknowledged the role of his cat on his rise to global acclaim: “To him, properly, belongs the foundation of my career.”

The year before Emily died, Wain switched publications, to become a staff illustrator for the *Illustrated London News*, with whom he stayed for a number of years, presumably in need of constancy and stability after an extended period of tragedy. But his parallel freelance career was growing. He was now specialising in illustrations of cats, drawn both faithfully and as his unique style of caricature. With each print of his work being sold and displayed in homes across the country, it was not only Wain's reputation that

◀ **nightmares** – which he later called “visions of extraordinary complexity” and contracted serious illnesses, such as scarlet fever. On doctor's orders, the young Louis didn't enter conventional education until the age of 10, and when he eventually did he often skipped school, electing instead to wander the streets of London in the safe solitude of his own company.

If this wandering soul lacked social confidence, he certainly didn't go wanting when it came to confidence in his own talent and ability. During his teenage years, he developed many and varied interests, including boxing, chemistry, designing and drawing inventions, writing an opera, and playing the piano. Wain threw himself into all these pursuits with gusto, eager to master them all, but it was in drawing that he truly excelled, setting him on his most



Before fixating on felines, Wain made money sketching idyllic countryside scenes



Wain titled this piece *The Modern 'Arry and 'Arriet Gouache* (gouache being a type of paint). He would get inspired by sketching people in public as cats



grew, but people's appreciation for cats. Attitudes shifted, and favourably so. Wain's art celebrated the cat as a multi-faceted domestic companion rather than a flea ridden moggy or mouse catcher, lifting the common perception of the animal out of the gutter. Compassion flooded his works, and he later became president of the National Cat Club, along with being a member of both the Society for the Protection of Cats and the Anti-Vivisection Society.

Wain's feline creations were the cipher for a worldview, the channel for his observations on human nature. He would present them as professors giving public talks, as gossiping knitters, or as ocean-going pirates. He occasionally drew a real person as a cat, such as Winston Churchill, and almost every picture would be shot through with a sense of mischief. As HG Wells observed: "Louis

Wain invented a cat style, a cat society, a whole cat world".

EXTRAORDINARILY PROLIFIC

The demand for his work was seemingly insatiable. By the turn of the century, Wain was working entirely freelance and at an extraordinarily prolific rate. At his most productive, he delivered up to 600 cat drawings per year for various clients. Some works would be black and white, but many would be vividly colourful. No matter how quickly he turned commissions around, his quality control never dropped an inch. His consistency attracted the attention of dozens of publishers tuned in to the popularity of these bug-eyed cats. Indeed, as many as 75 different publishers commissioned work from him.

Plenty of these were also attracted by Wain's lack of business know-how.

ABOVE: Wain's cats were reproduced on postcards and sold in huge numbers

LEFT: Cumberbatch as Wain in *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*, as the artist's caricatures are scrutinised by newspaper proprietor Sir William Ingram (Toby Jones)

TOP: These five cats celebrate with some Old Tom gin and cigars in *The Bachelor Party*

In being utterly committed to his creations and to the speedy fulfilment of commissions, he neglected to develop anything more than the sketchiest grasp of economics. Crucially, he didn't employ the services of an agent to plug this void. Despite still being the source of income and maintenance for his mother and sisters, he never enjoyed the financial security that his success merited. He was at the mercy of exploitative publishers and rarely insisting on retaining the rights to his work. As Chris Beetles noted, Wain was "the perfect one-stop artist for the ruthless entrepreneurial spirit of the age... a predictably sound craftsman who would naively sell for a one-off fee and not retain his copyright". Wain's work was reproduced over and over, but he rarely saw a penny beyond the initial fee.

Furthermore, any modest amount of money he did accumulate was often unwisely invested in other people's inventions. He saw no return on this



DID YOU KNOW?

SANTA CLAWS

While being treated at Bethlem Royal Hospital in the 1920s, Louis Wain was asked by his nurses whether he would like to help decorate for Christmas. He drew cats having festive fun – in scenes such as sharing a plum pudding – on the mirrors and walls.

ABOVE: *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*, directed by Will Sharpe, captures the vibrancy and creativity of Wain's art

LEFT: His more surreal pieces, such as this one, have been cited as proof of his declining state of mind, but wrongly

money. One such example occurred on a trip to New York, where he undertook illustration work for the mighty Hearst Corporation. However, with a large market opening up for him, he decided to invest his earnings into the development of a supposedly revolutionary oil lamp. It was a financial cul-de-sac and left Wain to sail back to Britain worse off than when he had left.

MENTAL DETERIORATION

Just as erratic as Wain's fiscal affairs was his behaviour, which grew angrier and more violent as he got older. So unbearable did his family find this that, in 1924, they had him committed to Springfield Hospital in south London. Initially, the state of his finances meant he was placed in a pauper's ward, so it was only the following year, when his hospitalisation was discovered, that personal interventions from Wells and the prime minister saw Wain transferred to a more comfortable institution, the Bethlem Royal Hospital in Southwark and, a few years later, to the leafy environs of Napsbury Hospital in Hertfordshire. There, sharing the gardens with a sizeable cat population, he continued to draw and paint until his death in 1939, at the age of 78.

Wain had been believed to have been suffering from schizophrenia, rather than the 'mere' depression that might understandably come from a troublesome, tumultuous life. Much of

“Some of Wain's works were more abstract and kaleidoscopic than the art that made his name”

this theory comes from one particular psychiatrist, Walter Maclay. The year that Wain died, Maclay found eight colourful drawings in a junk shop in Notting Hill. These were works of Wain's that were decidedly more abstract and vibrantly kaleidoscopic than the art that made his name. Maclay presented these drawings as evidence of a worsening mental state; the more psychedelic the work, reasoned the doctor, the deeper and more severe Wain's condition.

But Maclay's diagnosis was flawed, as Wain's biographer Rodney Dale argued.

“With no evidence of the order of their progression, Maclay arranged them in a sequence which clearly demonstrated, he thought, the progressive deterioration of the artist's mental abilities.” Dale was unconvinced. “There is no clear justification for regarding them as more than samples of Louis Wain's art at different times. Wain experimented with patterns and cats, and even quite late in life was still producing conventional cat pictures, perhaps 10 years after his ‘later’ productions which are patterns rather than cats.”

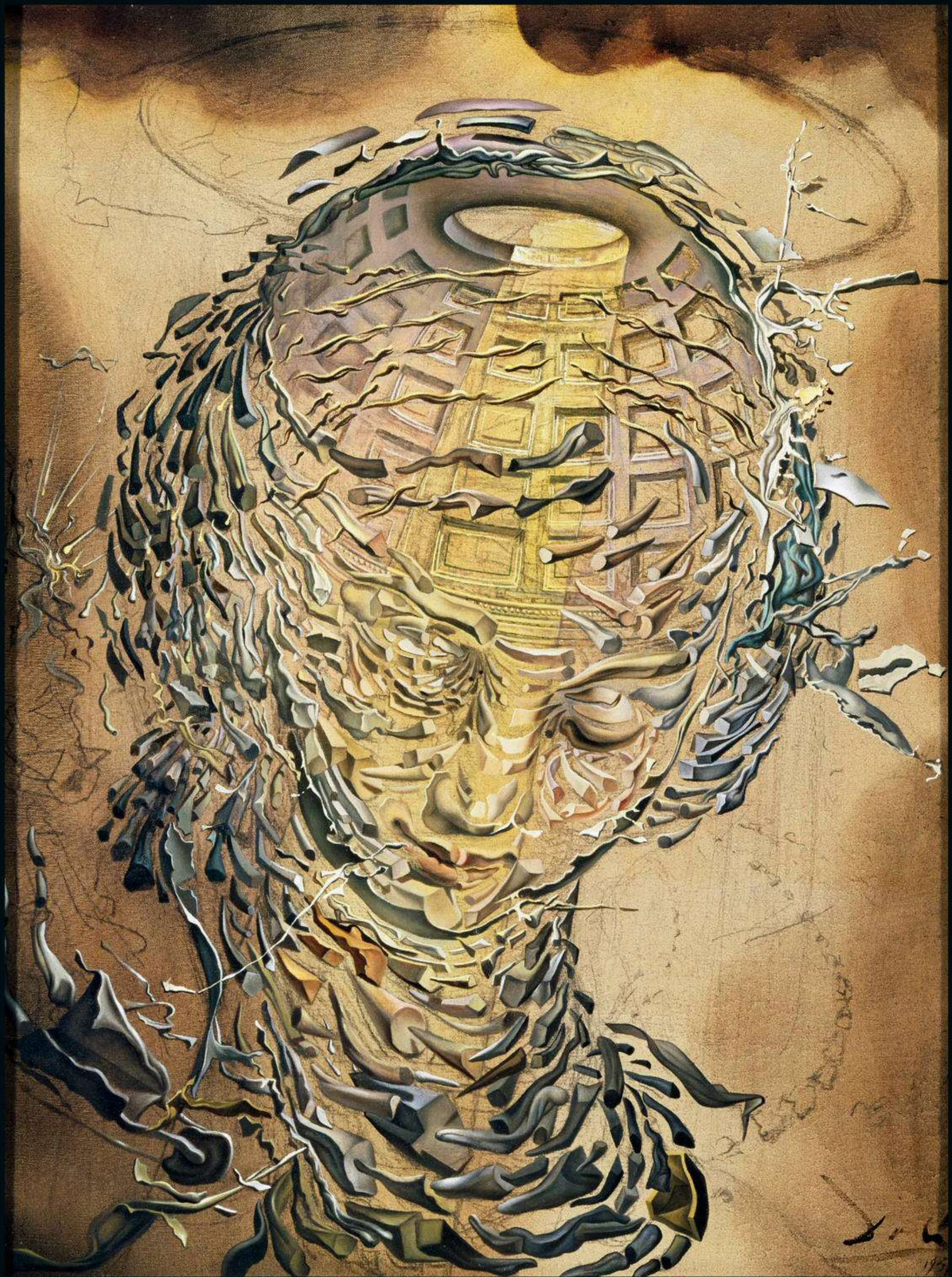
Whatever the truth of Wain's mental disorders, he was undeniably a huge talent who worked at a phenomenally prodigious rate to become an artist appreciated by millions. Nevertheless, it wasn't until 1972 that his drawings earned their first exhibition (at the Victoria and Albert Museum), and the acclaim still comes. The musician Nick Cave has declared Wain “the artist closest to my heart”.

More than 80 years after his death, his story is finally being told on film, and, as the actor portraying him observes, Wain should be remembered for his brightness, his creativity and his optimism. “Despite the endless base note of loss and isolation,” concludes Benedict Cumberbatch, “Louis' life was often uplifting and inspiring. He brought such beauty and celebration and joy to the lives of so many people.”

GET HOOKED

READ

Louis Wain's Cats, by Chris Beetles (Canongate Books, 2021), features hundreds of Wain's drawings and a foreword by Benedict Cumberbatch



WHAT GREAT PAINTINGS SAY

Religion meets science in an explosive piece of art by one of the 20th century's most controversial painters

Exploding Raphaelesque Head

by Salvador Dalí, 1951

On 6 August 1945, a flash a thousand times brighter than the Sun illuminated the sky above Hiroshima, as an atomic bomb, dropped by US B 29 bomber *Enola Gay*, detonated over the Japanese city. The wave of intense heat and wind that followed created a hellish inferno that destroyed everything and everyone in its path. Three days later, a second bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki. The atomic age had begun.

In the wake of the destruction, and in the years that followed, artists, musicians and writers alike responded to the events of 1945, among them Spanish Surrealist artist Salvador Dalí, who was living in the US when the bombings took place. “The atomic explosion of August 6, 1945, shook me seismically,” he told André Parinaud for his 1975 work *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dalí*. “Thenceforth, the atom was my favourite food for thought...”

DALÍ'S DOUBLE VISION

“Dalí was inspired by the huge advances in nuclear physics, and the pictorial possibilities this offered,” says Patrick Elliott, chief curator of modern and contemporary art at the National Galleries of Scotland. “In *Exploding Raphaelesque Head*, the subject appears to be shattering into a mass of swirling, fragmentary particles, a reference to the explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but the floating pieces can also be seen as drawing together again, a response to the scientific knowledge that solid objects, when magnified, are actually made up of billions of tiny atomic particles.”

As well as exploring the atomic age in which Dalí was living, the painting also reflects his love of the Italian Renaissance Masters such as Leonardo da Vinci a passion that set him apart from other Surrealist painters. Surrealism, a cultural movement that emerged in France in the 1920s, rejected the rationality and accuracy of traditional classical European

painting, seeking instead to liberate the imagination and focus on dreams and the unconscious.

“The tender expression and halo of the Madonna in the painting is reminiscent of that painted by the Italian Renaissance artist Raphael, of whom Dalí was a great admirer,” says Elliott. “The upper part of the subject’s head is based on the Pantheon building in Rome, an ancient temple completed in c126–128 AD during the rule of Emperor Hadrian, and famous for its huge domed ceiling and circular opening (*oculus*) depicted here with a shaft of light pouring down into the face.

“The inclusion of such optical effects is typical of Dalí, who loved to create what he referred to as double images, which left the viewer free to interpret what they were seeing. Some might see it as a painting of the Pantheon, whilst others might view the piece as an image of the Madonna in the style of Raphael, who, incidentally, is buried at the Pantheon, giving the building even more significance to Dalí.”

Dalí’s relationship with religion was complicated. Raised by a devout Catholic mother and an atheist father, Dalí initially adopted his father’s attitudes to religion but drifted back to the Catholic church from the 1940s. Two years before painting *Exploding Raphaelesque Head* Dalí was granted a private audience with Pope Pius XII, after which he described himself as a “Catholic without faith”. He would, in many of his later works, seek to reconcile Catholic dogma with science – a period he referred to as Nuclear Mysticism.

Today, the 43cm x 33cm painting is privately owned and on long term loan to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, where it forms part of the Beyond Realism: Dada and Surrealism display, hanging alongside works by Marcel Duchamp, René Magritte and Max Ernst. A favourite with visitors, its incredible detail and complex subject matter makes it as much of a talking point today as it was at its creation in 1951. 

WORDS: CHARLOTTE HODGMAN



1. HALO

Parts of the image, including the halo, have been drawn in pencil or crayon rather than being painted – a technique not often found in Dalí’s works.

2. WHEELBARROW

The image of a wheelbarrow is taken from Jean-François Millet’s 1857–59 painting *The Angelus*, which depicts a man and woman in a field – with a wheelbarrow – praying at the end of the work day. Dalí interpreted the wheelbarrow as a rustic erotic symbol, and it appears in many of his paintings.

3. PANTHEON

At midday on 21 April – the legendary founding date of Rome – sunlight enters the *oculus* and illuminates the entrance doorway. At this precise time, the emperor would have entered the temple, bathed in sunlight.

GET HOOKED

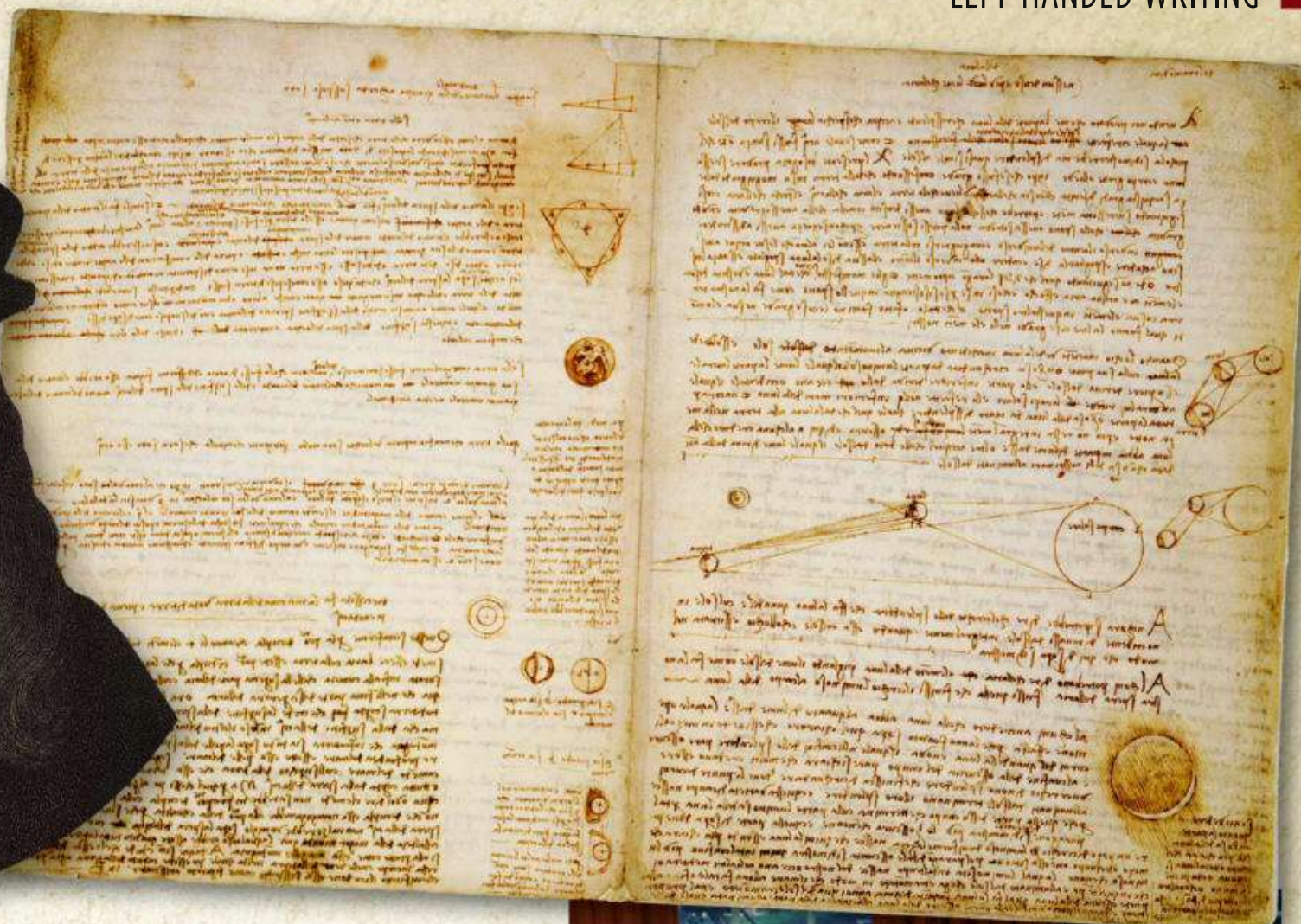
Exploding Raphaelesque Head is on show in the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art’s Modern One building in Edinburgh. Visit nationalgalleries.org for more information

A history of left-handed writing

Dr Deborah Thorpe considers our attitudes to lefties throughout history, from the challenges facing medieval scribes to the 19th-century attempts to train children out of the 'defect'



Famous lefty Leonardo da Vinci wrote many of his personal notes in mirror writing, probably so that he could write right to left and not smudge the ink



From early in our lives, most of us will demonstrate what is known as 'lateral preference': the consistent use of one limb or sense organ to perform a task. While we tend to favour one hand over the other, we also have a foot, eye, and ear preference. Every 'lefty' will be familiar with the exasperation of living in a right handed world – struggling with scissors or can openers – and when it comes to writing and drawing, when our use of one hand over the other becomes obvious at a very young age, only a small percentage of us lean towards the left. It seems that this is genetic, but researchers are still investigating exactly how and why this occurs.

There have been a few notable names of left handed figures, including Barack Obama and seven other former US presidents. The author Lewis Carroll, Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens and Nobel prize winning scientist Marie Curie were all 'lefties'; Leonardo da Vinci favoured his left (although possibly due to a paralysis of his right); and Joan of Arc was often depicted wielding her sword in her left hand.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

As recently as the mid 20th century, there have been plenty of examples of left handedness being discouraged. Even physical restraints have been used, such as tying a child's left hand behind their back. But going back to medieval times, our ancestors, while facing certain concerns with practicality, did not always mind which hand was used.

For those living before the invention of the printing press, writing by hand was the only way to record information.

This work was almost always done by scribes, who were usually right handed. Most artistic depictions of scribes show them with quill in the right hand and a knife in the left to be used to pin down and stabilise the parchment on the desk. Aside from any ideological reasons, writing was a practical nuisance for a left handed scribe.

In his book *Their Hands Before Our Eyes*, Malcolm Parkes, an authority on medieval manuscripts, stresses that as western writing involves moving from left to right, the task would have been much easier for right handed scribes. In addition, scribes had to do this on a sloped desk using quill and ink. A left handed scribe would have made the controlled movements required with greater difficulty than a right handed writer.

A right handed scribe, Parkes explains, would pull each stroke to the right, distributing ink onto the parchment as they went, whereas a left hander had to learn to push, which would be a more laborious movement. Problems with smearing the ink would also be frustrating. The resulting slow and arduous writing might have been



ABOVE: The earliest-known image of Joan of Arc, from 1429, depicts her holding a sword with her left hand

ABOVE RIGHT: Barack Obama was the eighth left-handed US president, all but one of them being in the 20th century

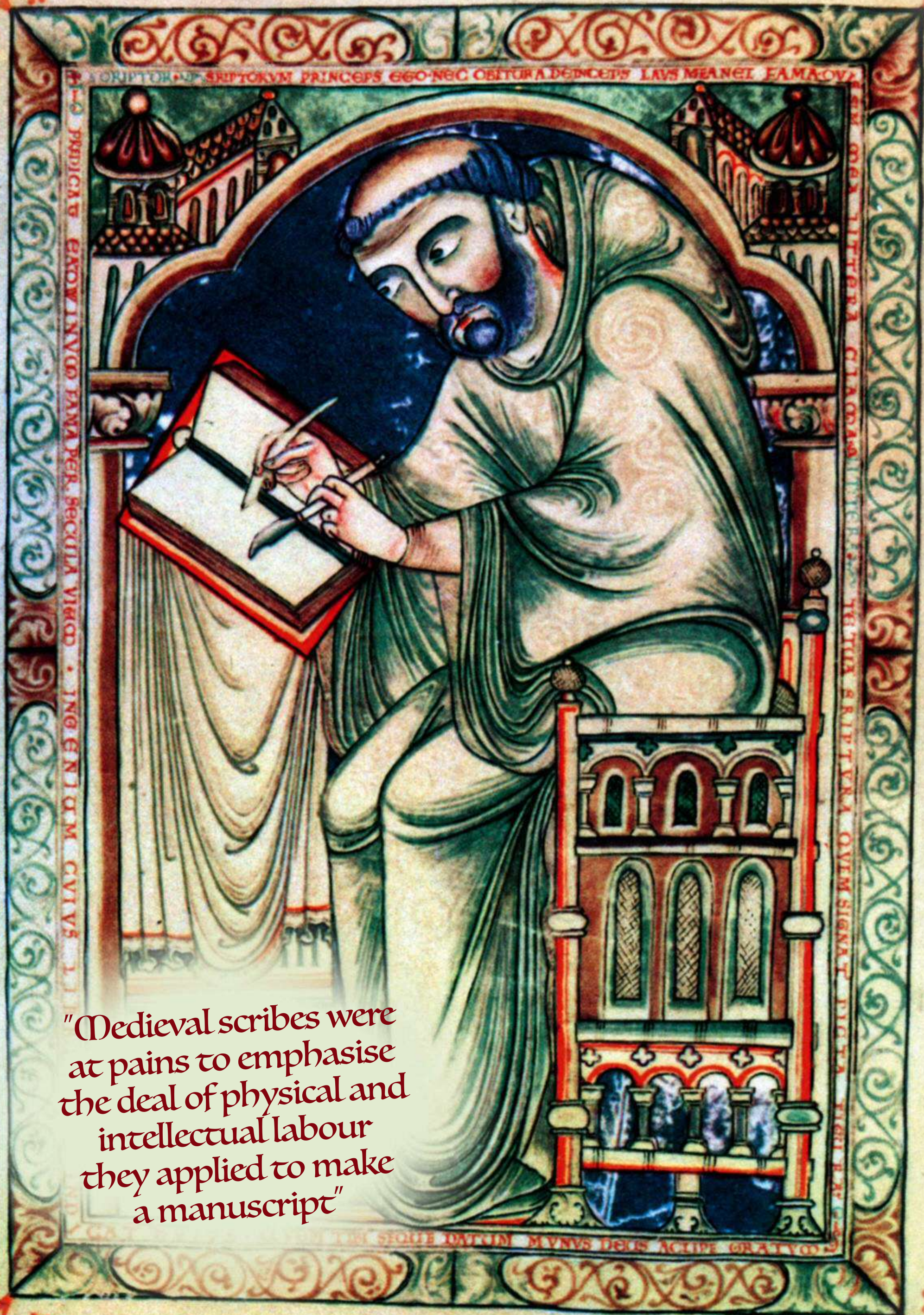
"Physical restraints have discouraged left-handedness, such as tying a child's left hand behind their back"

impractical for a professional scribe who was paid per book or page.

So, many natural left handers might have been steered away from becoming a professional scribe in the first place. In contrast, it might be speculated that a left handed monk or nun – for whom writing was not their main occupation, but part of their religious duties – would be more likely to write, though with great frustration.

Despite the impracticalities, Parkes detected several features in medieval manuscripts that were caused by left handed writing: awkward rhythms, blotting and difficulty in maintaining a controlled movement. And as historian Timothy Graham mentioned when reviewing Parkes' book, there is a rare depiction of Saint Jerome writing with his left hand in a 15th century manuscript kept in Chicago's Newberry Library. Suzanne Karr Schmidt, curator of rare books and manuscripts at the Newberry, states that it is possible that the depiction is a transfer copy from

"Medieval scribes were at pains to emphasise the deal of physical and intellectual labour they applied to make a manuscript"





◀ a drawing where Jerome was right handed, but there is no conclusive evidence to prove this theory.

Being left handed had further practical implications for a medieval scribe. In the same way that modern left handers might invest in specially designed items for left handed use, a scribe would find it hard to use a quill made from the left wing of the bird, which has a slight curve to the right. They would need to select one from the right wing instead.

BRAGGING RIGHTS

Rather than being ashamed of being left handed, some writers could use it to their advantage. Medieval scribes were at pains to emphasise the great deal of physical and intellectual labour they applied to make a manuscript. It was a back breaking process, and, for a monastic scribe, it was an act of worship, so the more laborious the better.

In her book *The Scribes for Women's Convents in Late Medieval Germany*, Cynthia J Cyrus has pointed out that being a rare left handed scribe gave one nun, called Margaretha von Schonberg, special "bragging rights". In the colophon, the part of the manuscript where the scribe could claim recognition for their work, the nun boasted: "Amen, amen. Margaretha von Schonberg has written this with her left hand... pray to God for me. Amen."

Since writing with the left hand was so much harder for a scribe, Margaretha felt able to claim greater recognition. It seems that she was not a one off either. Parkes found several other colophons stating that the scribe was left handed, usually with the use of the Latin phrase *manu sinistra*, or 'with the left hand'. These

accompany the aforementioned physical evidence in the writing itself to show that the presence of left handed scribes in medieval times, though rare, was not unheard of and did not necessarily carry negative connotations.

A preference for the left hand did not seem to be a problem for the artists of the Renaissance either. In the 1560s, the Italian sculptor and architect Raffaello da Montelupo reminisced that his teacher did not mind that he wrote with his left hand since his handwriting was good. He would write from right to left – highly unusual for a western writer – and so attracted attention from other scribes. At one time, 10 notaries gathered to watch him write; the professional writers were fascinated by his unconventional style and could not believe that the resulting script was readable.

As Carmen Bambach, curator of Italian and Spanish drawings at the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art in New York has noted, it is striking that Raffaello's teacher never attempted to train him out of using of his left hand. It seems that practicality was the biggest concern to pre modern teachers of writing. If a person found it possible, or indeed preferable, to write with the left hand, then that was acceptable if the resulting work was unaffected.

Lauren Julius Harris, an expert on handedness at Michigan State University, writes that being left handed in the 18th and 19th centuries was dismissed as a defect by some writers in the article, 'On teaching infants "the right use of their hands"'. Harris reveals that one 19th century parenting manual gives mothers reassurance "lest their children should be left-handed". The author, an American



ABOVE LEFT: Children in Edwardian England: a time when left-handed writing was seen as a 'defect' and punished harshly

ABOVE RIGHT: Specially made left-handed products have become increasingly more available since the mid-20th century

OPPOSITE: Depictions of medieval scribes, such as Eadwine from this 12th-century psalter, nearly always show them as being right-handed

woman named Mary Palmer Tyler, quotes an earlier poem *La Balia (The Nurse)* by advising: "That as soon as its hands are free to move, the child should be taught, but gently ('with reprehension light'), to use its right hand in preference to the left." Harris reveals that other writers advocated sterner methods in correcting the left handed 'defect'.

But in *The Maternal Physician* (1818), Tyler herself expressed resignation that it could never be entirely done away with: "It is my decided opinion, that if a child is left handed, it is a natural defect which it will be impossible ever entirely to overcome; and although the infant might, as it advanced in life, be taught to use the right hand so well as greatly to obviate the inconvenience and awkward appearance arising from it, yet the propensity would always predominate."

Later in the 19th century and into the 20th, attempts to train children out of left handedness were common. As the teaching of writing became widespread and children were taught the skills of reading and writing in schools, teachers employed a variety of methods to encourage right handedness, from tying up the left hand to knuckle raps for writing the 'wrong' way.

The psychologist Chris McManus has suggested that the Industrial Revolution encouraged this, due to the right handed design of the machinery in mills and factories. McManus, in his book *Right Hand, Left Hand*, finds an account from a school near Falkirk, Scotland, in 1880, noting that "eight children had come to school left handed". The phrase "had come" implies that they were not allowed to remain so.

With the decline of these harsh methods, the numbers of left handers has risen sharply over the course of the 20th century – although widespread awareness of the struggles they face still lagging behind. Right handers: imagine a world where all of your scissors were made for the comfort of left-handers. 📍

DR DEBORAH THORPE works for the Digital Repository of Ireland, and has specialised in the ageing and neurological disorders of medieval scribes as can be seen in their handwriting

WHAT IF...

GEORGE III HADN'T 'LOST' THE COLONIES?

Professor Andrew Roberts tells Jonny Wilkes why a British victory in the American Revolutionary War could have led to the creation of an all-powerful English-speaking empire, governed from New York

There is a school of thought that winning the American Revolutionary War would have actually been bad for Britain.

At risk of a renewal of hostilities by a resentful American population still seeking their independence, the British may have been compelled to maintain a large and costly presence in the colonies; rather than building a trading relationship with the United States, the empire would have been burdened with the expense of keeping control.

Professor Andrew Roberts, historian, journalist and author of *George III: The Life and Reign of Britain's Most Misunderstood Monarch*, envisages a different scenario, however, where many Americans happily remained under British rule. "You have to remember

that about one third of Americans were Loyalists and about one third were sitting on the fence waiting to see which side won," he says. "If the British had won an early and decisive victory, then those on the Loyalist side would have represented a majority."

A ROYAL RELOCATION

The 13 colonies still being within the British empire means a powerful union of English speaking peoples could have emerged, with America the dominant partner, claims Roberts. "You could have had the Hanoverians moving out to New York after recognising that America was going to be the most powerful country in the world there would have been no reason to stay in London. The British would have become a kind of adjunct to America."

This would have all obviously depended on Britain winning the war, but it had many opportunities to do so. If the British had captured George Washington as he attempted to evacuate his forces from New York, to name one, or if the British general Sir William Howe had not launched his own expedition to seize Philadelphia and so doom his comrade John Burgoyne to a major defeat at Saratoga, to name another, then the war could have been won.

After their triumph, George III and his government would have then had two options: meting out harsh punishments on the defeated rebels, or conciliation. Roberts favours the latter scenario, claiming that any surrender would have been based on extremely generous terms. "The British didn't want this war in the first place, and by 1778 they were making huge offers: essentially, no taxation without representation; colonial representation in the House of Commons; or a form of dominion status of self government." With such a peace, any American attempt to renew the war would have been averted.

"I wouldn't be surprised if people in Whitehall had come up with a condominium system whereby Americans were self governing with a central parliament, similar to what was starting in Canada and would later be seen in Australia and New Zealand," says Roberts. "There were already people doing that kind of thinking, including Benjamin Franklin before the war." So, instead of a Congress at the Capitol and a president in the White House, there could have been an American parliament in New York.

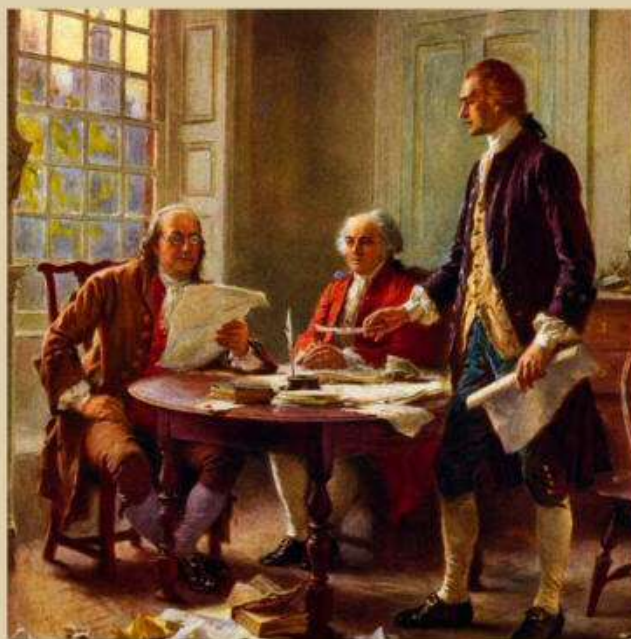
Meanwhile, George III, rather than being remembered as the "mad king", would be regarded as "one of the greatest kings of England", states Roberts, having defeated a massive rebellion and then, through amelioration, brought the Americans back into the fold.

But how would the dominion have progressed? It is possible the westward expansion would have been slower

IN CONTEXT

In 1775, the tensions between Britain and its 13 American colonies – dominated by the issues of political representation and taxation – snapped, resulting in the American Revolutionary War. Facing the superior British army and navy, as well as thousands of Loyalists, the 'Patriots' took up arms and declared independence to form the United States of America. By the 1780s, the French, Spanish and Dutch had joined their cause, turning the conflict into a world war and providing the vital support needed to pull off an unlikely victory.

It was a humiliation for the British and King George III. For the US, the battles, people and documents of the war are not just part of history, but are deeply entrenched in the national psyche. The fight for independence lionised names like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin; created icons such as the Stars and Stripes flag and Declaration of Independence; and ultimately set the nation on a path to becoming a global superpower.



Founding Fathers such as Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson (left to right) would become US icons



without the deep-rooted belief in the US that it was their ‘manifest destiny’ to build a nation “from sea to shining sea”, although if we assume that the Americans still got rid of the royal proclamation of 1763, which forbade settlement beyond a line in the Allegheny Mountains, then not much would have changed. “It would have been terrible for the Native Americans, but then it was terrible for them anyway.”

EARLY EMANCIPATION

Of course, another oppressed people to consider are the enslaved Africans, and it is with regards to their lives that Roberts believes there could have been a significant difference. “I think it would have been much better for the enslaved Africans to have stayed in the British empire,” he adds. “The British abolished the slave trade in 1807 and slavery in 1833, whereas in the United States there were more than 700,000 people killed in a devastating civil war in the 1860s before slavery came to an end.”

MAIN: An engraving depicts the toppling of King George III’s statue in New York on 9 July 1776. The revolutionaries melted the monument down to make musket balls

INSET: King George III (r1760–1820), seen here in his coronation robes, was mentally unfit to rule during the final decade of his life



“INSTEAD OF BEING REMEMBERED AS THE ‘MAD KING’, GEORGE III WOULD BE ‘ONE OF THE GREATEST KINGS OF ENGLAND’”

Still, the American dominion would have kept expanding and developing throughout the 19th century, much as the US did, before threatening to supersede Britain in power.

Assuming the Americans continued to have political representation, then their larger populations would have meant that, through sheer numbers, they would have had a majority in the House of Commons. In fact, it is likely that the Anglo-American empire would have grown to such an extent that the course of the 20th century would have been radically different. “Kaiser Wilhelm II, faced with an extraordinary empire covering Britain,

America, Canada, India, Australia, New Zealand and more, might not have started a war in 1914,” affirms Roberts. “That means you wouldn’t have had the Bolshevik revolution and communism, or Hitler and the Nazis, and the millions of people who died in the world wars would have remained alive. The world would have been a happier place.”

LISTEN

BBC RADIO



Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss the American Revolution in an archive episode of *In Our Time*:

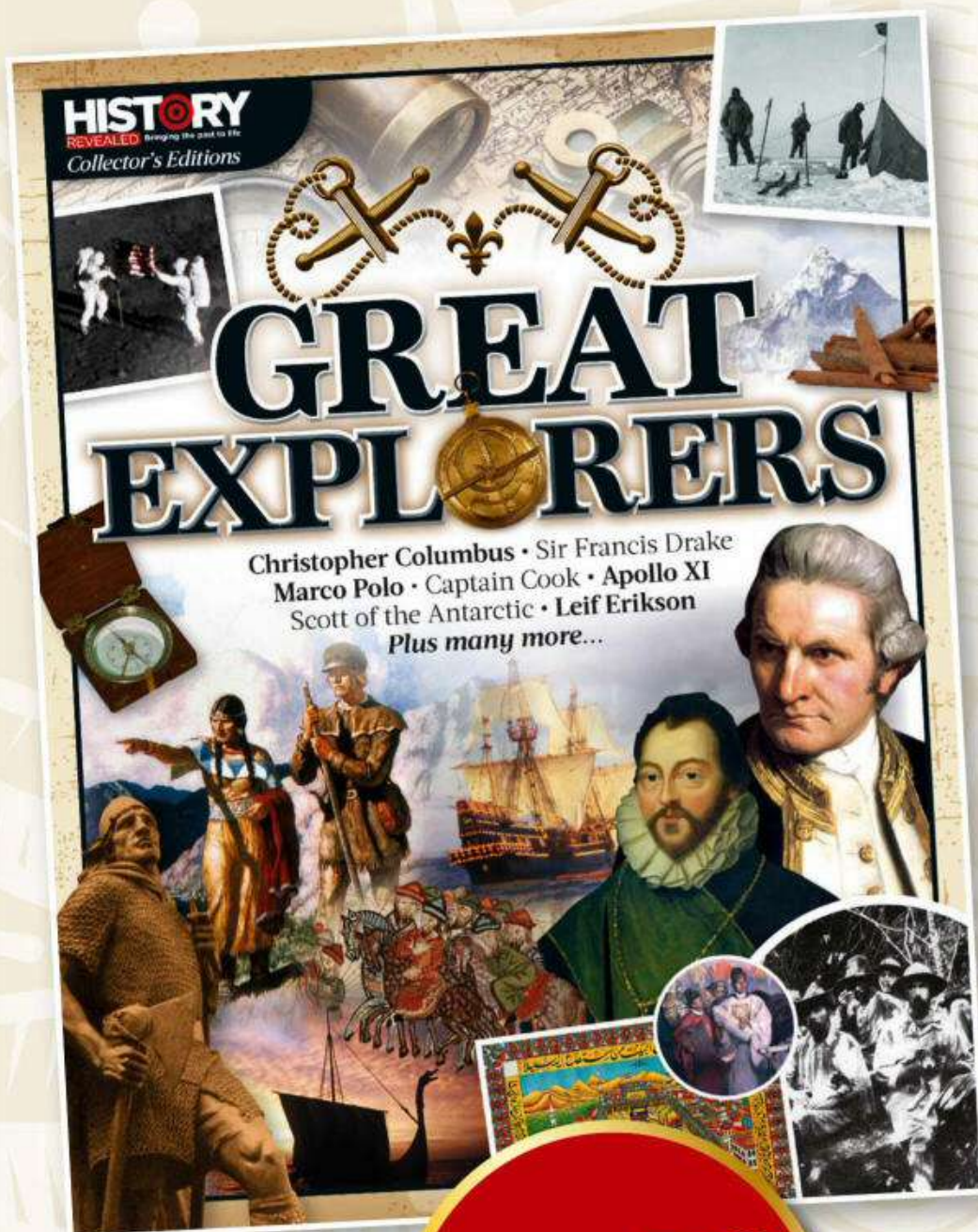
bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p004y28v

NEXT MONTH

What if... the Ottomans had won the battle of Lepanto?

From the makers of

BBC
HISTORY
REVEALED



GREAT EXPLORERS

From the Vikings to the Space Race, the story of humankind is entwined with our search for what lies over the hills, across the sea or beyond the stars.

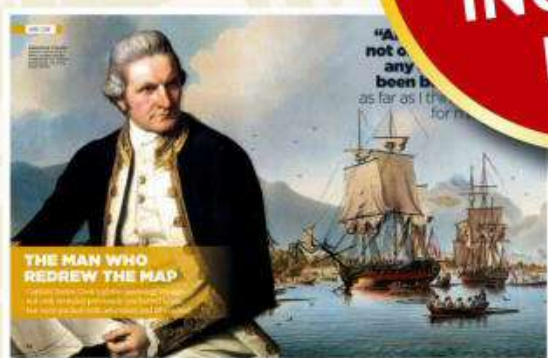
In this special edition from the makers of *BBC History Revealed* magazine, we meet the intrepid travellers whose exploits have made them household names

INSIDE YOU WILL FIND:

- Enthralling tales of discovery
- Maps and illustrations
- Revealing images and expert analysis

PLUS: Subscribers to *BBC History Revealed* receive FREE UK postage on this special edition

£9.99
INC FREE
P&P*



PEOPLE – Who were the explorers whose endeavours have shaped history?



PLACES – Beautifully illustrated maps bring journeys of discovery to life



TECHNOLOGY – From Viking longships to spacecraft, these are the tools of the explorer's trade

ORDER ONLINE

www.buysubscriptions.com/GreatExplorers20

OR CALL US ON **03330 162 138⁺** QUOTE CODE **GREAT EXPLORERS 2020 PRINT 1**

*UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff).

Outside of free call packages call charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open Mon to Fri 8am – 6pm and Sat 9am – 1pm.

* Subscribers to *BBC History Revealed* receive FREE UK POSTAGE on this special edition. Prices including postage are: £11.49 for all non-subscribers, £12.99 for Europe and £13.49 for the Rest of World.

All orders subject to availability. Please allow up to 21 days for delivery.

Q&A YOU ASK, WE ANSWER

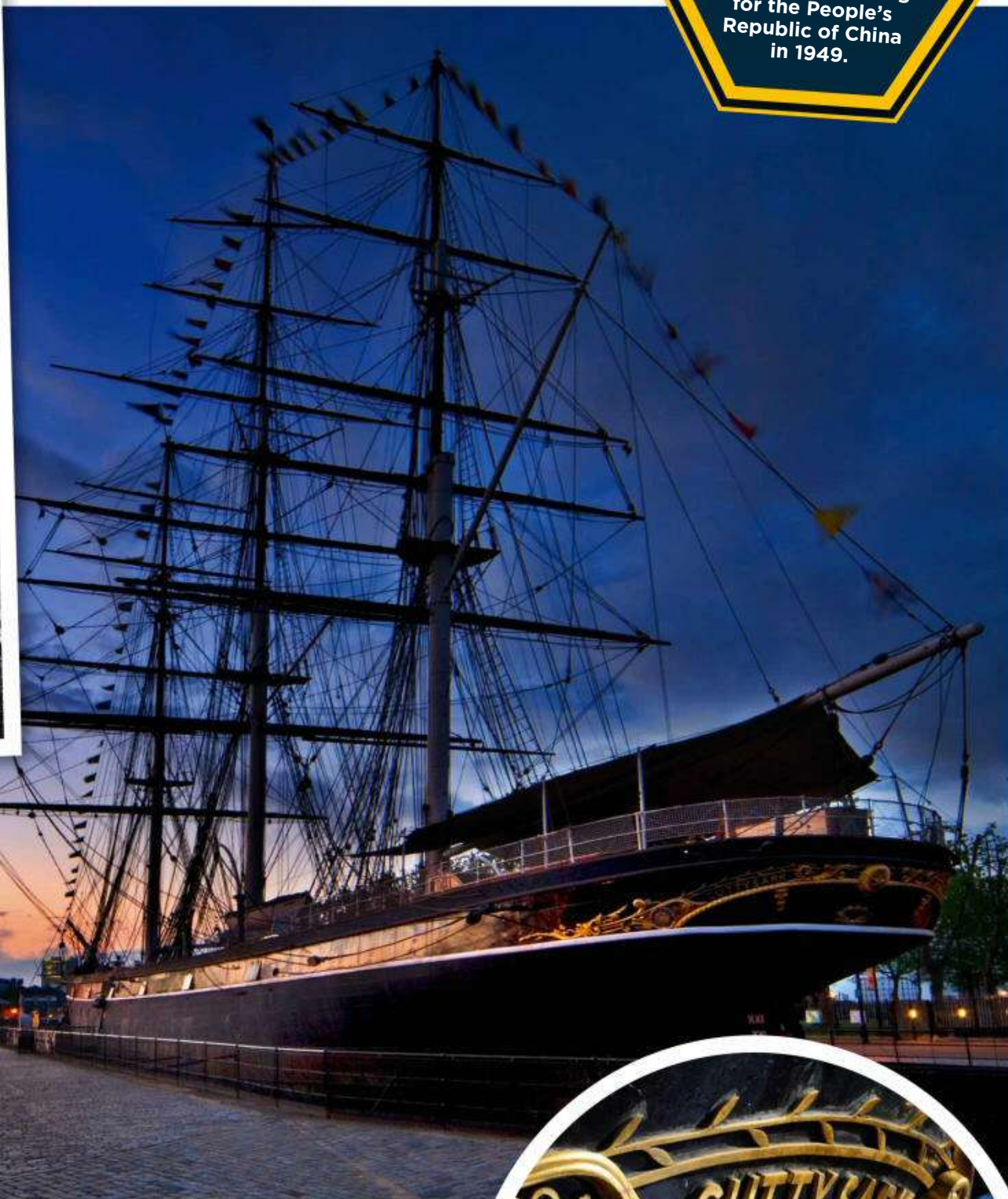
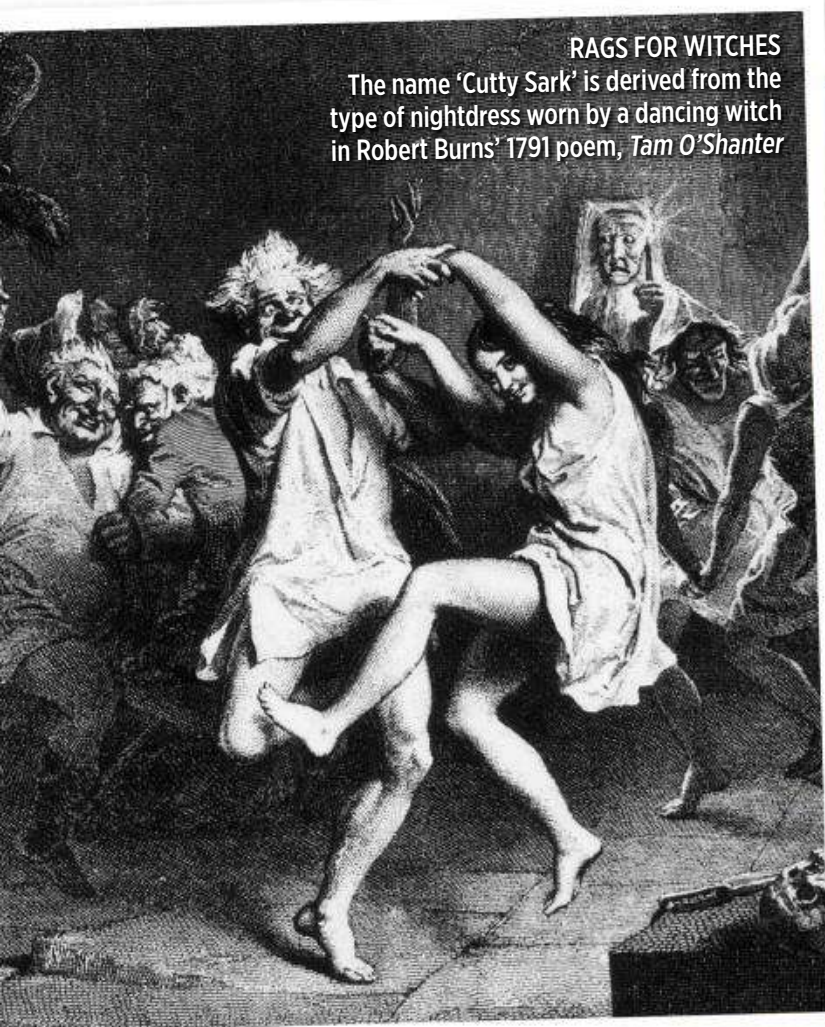
HISTORY'S GREATEST CONUNDRUMS AND MYSTERIES SOLVED

2,992

The number of designs submitted to the committee tasked with choosing a new national flag for the People's Republic of China in 1949.

RAGS FOR WITCHES

The name 'Cutty Sark' is derived from the type of nightdress worn by a dancing witch in Robert Burns' 1791 poem, *Tam O'Shanter*



BIG CLIPPER

Despite being hit by fires in 2007 and 2014, the 19th-century vessel has been restored and remains open to the public in Greenwich

Where does the name 'Cutty Sark' come from?

SHORT ANSWER

It refers to a short nightie worn by a water-hating witch in a Robert Burns poem... a natural fit for a ship, right?

LONG ANSWER

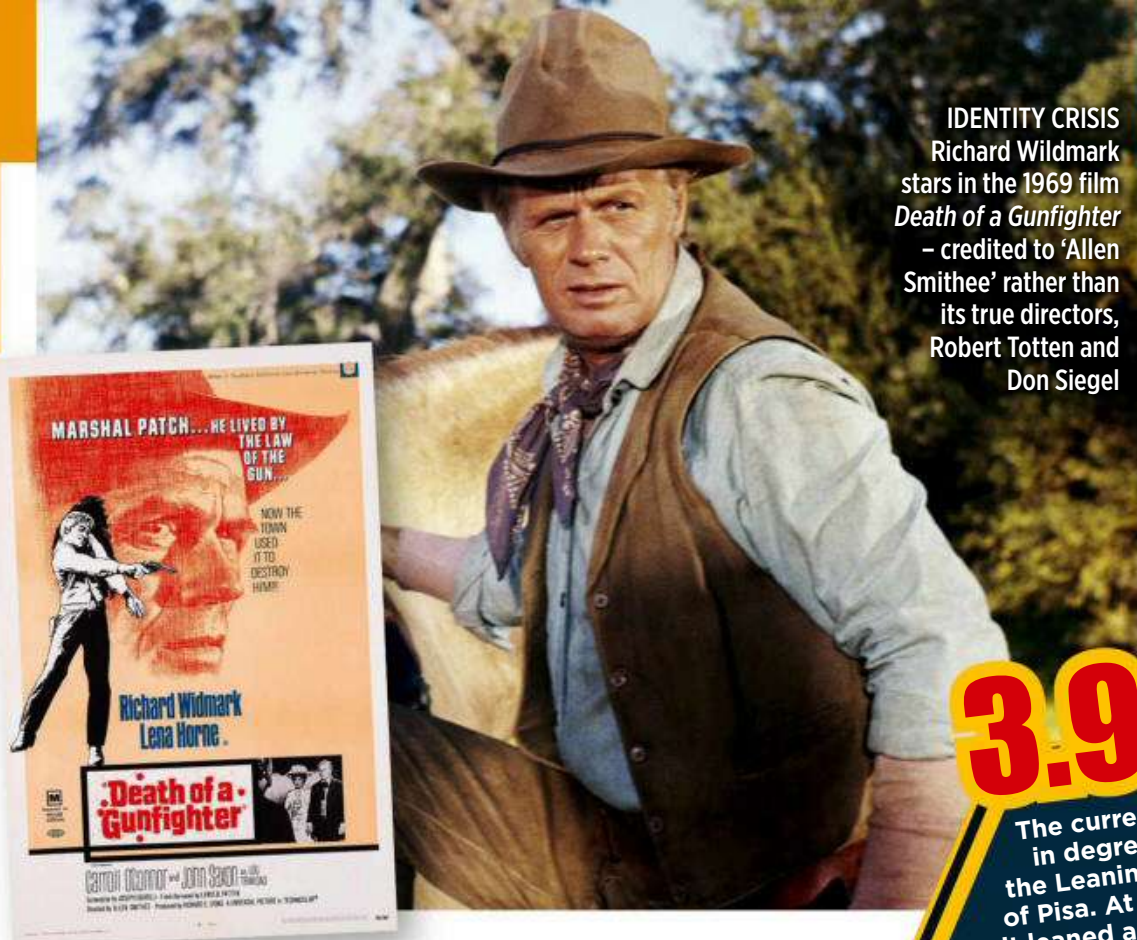
Any visit to London will always be enriched by popping over to Greenwich, where you'll find, among other things, the National Maritime Museum, John Harrison's magnificent clocks to tell Longitude, and *Cutty Sark*. The 19th-century tea clipper – the fastest in her day with a state-of-the-art design before steamships came along – has been on display since 1957 and its name is famous around the world.

The ship's original owner, Jock Willis, chose the sobriquet *Cutty Sark* having taken it from the poem *Tam O'Shanter* by fellow Scot Robert Burns. The titular Tam, on his way drunk one night, sees a witch named Nannie dancing in a 'cutty sark', or revealingly short nightdress. "Weel done, Cutty-sark," he calls to her. This gets Nannie's attention, who chases Tam and is only prevented from catching him when his horse's tail comes away in her hand when she grabs it.

The white figurehead of *Cutty Sark* is of Nannie, still clutching the horse Meg's tail. Other than out of a dose of Scottish pride, it is not abundantly clear why Willis thought this would be a good name for a ship, especially since witches were well-known to be unable to cross bodies of water.



GETTY IMAGES X1, ALAMY X2



IDENTITY CRISIS
Richard Widmark stars in the 1969 film *Death of a Gunfighter* – credited to ‘Allen Smithee’ rather than its true directors, Robert Totten and Don Siegel

When were the First and Second Reichs?

SHORT ANSWER Before the Nazis were the Holy Roman and German empires. The Reich-tag came later, though

LONG ANSWER Naming his Nazi regime the ‘Third Reich’ meant Adolf Hitler could legitimise his dictatorship by placing it in the grand history of Germany as the natural successor to the two ‘Reichs’ (empires) that came before. The first was the Holy Roman Empire, which began with the coronation of Charlemagne in AD 800 and lasted until the 19th century – the true ‘1,000-year Reich’ in that case – while the second was the German empire that began with unification in 1871 and ended with defeat in World War I. But neither empires actually called themselves the ‘First’ and ‘Second Reich’: the terms came from the 1923 book *Das Dritte Reich* by Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, who envisaged a utopian third Reich to come. The Nazis needed no convincing that they would build it.

3.99

The current tilt, in degrees, of the Leaning Tower of Pisa. At its worst it leaned around 5.5 degrees – computer projections claimed it would topple over at 5.44.

Who was Alan Smithee?

SHORT ANSWER A director with an impressive collection of wholly unimpressive movies... or was he?

LONG ANSWER Between 1968 and 2000, a filmmaker named Alan (sometimes Allen) Smithee directed dozens of movies, TV shows and music videos. True, most are pretty bad, but that’s a prolific career by anyone’s standards. Except, it’s all a lie. There was no such person as Alan Smithee.

The name was used to patch a movie’s credits when a director wished to distance themselves from a project on which they had lost creative control. The Directors Guild of America came up with the fictitious auteur to resolve the

problems surrounding the 1969 western *Death of a Gunfighter*. It had two directors, neither of whom wanted the credit – and so Smithee was born.

The 1997 movie *An Alan Smithee Film: Burn Hollywood Burn* finally gave the game away. It was about a director called Alan Smithee who couldn’t disown his work since that would mean it being credited to his name anyway. Cinema audiences eventually got wise to the three decade ploy and ‘Alan Smithee’ was forced to retire.



MAKING HIS (DEUTSCH) MARK
Otto von Bismarck formally declares the unification of Germany in 1871, spawning an empire that would later be known as the ‘Second Reich’

What happened to Chopin’s heart?

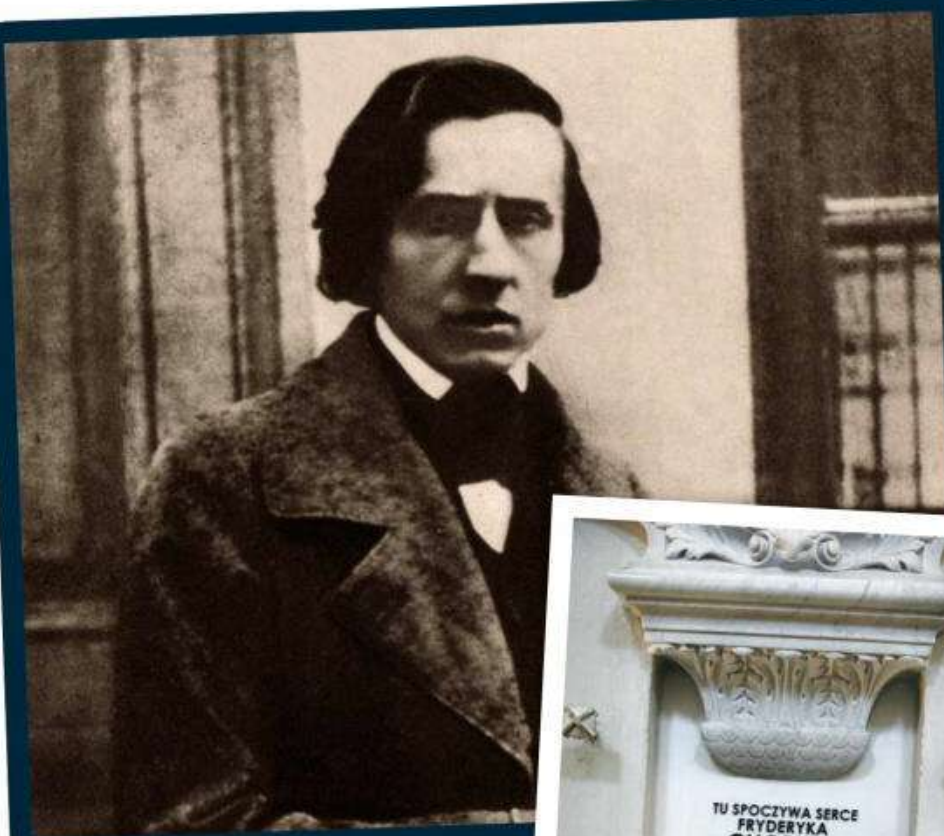
SHORT ANSWER The composer’s heart was not buried with the rest of him, and went on to survive a world war

LONG ANSWER The Polish composer Frédéric Chopin died in 1849, aged 39, having suffered from ill health for much of his life. He is buried at the Père-Lachaise Cemetery in Paris, France. His heart, however, is in Poland.

He had requested it be removed out of a fear of being buried alive. The heart was therefore placed in a sealed jar filled with alcohol, perhaps cognac, and taken by Chopin’s sister Ludwika to their native

country. It remained at the Church of the Holy Cross in Warsaw until World War II, when it was removed and hidden by the Germans. They didn’t like the idea of anything of Chopin’s being a rallying point for the Poles.

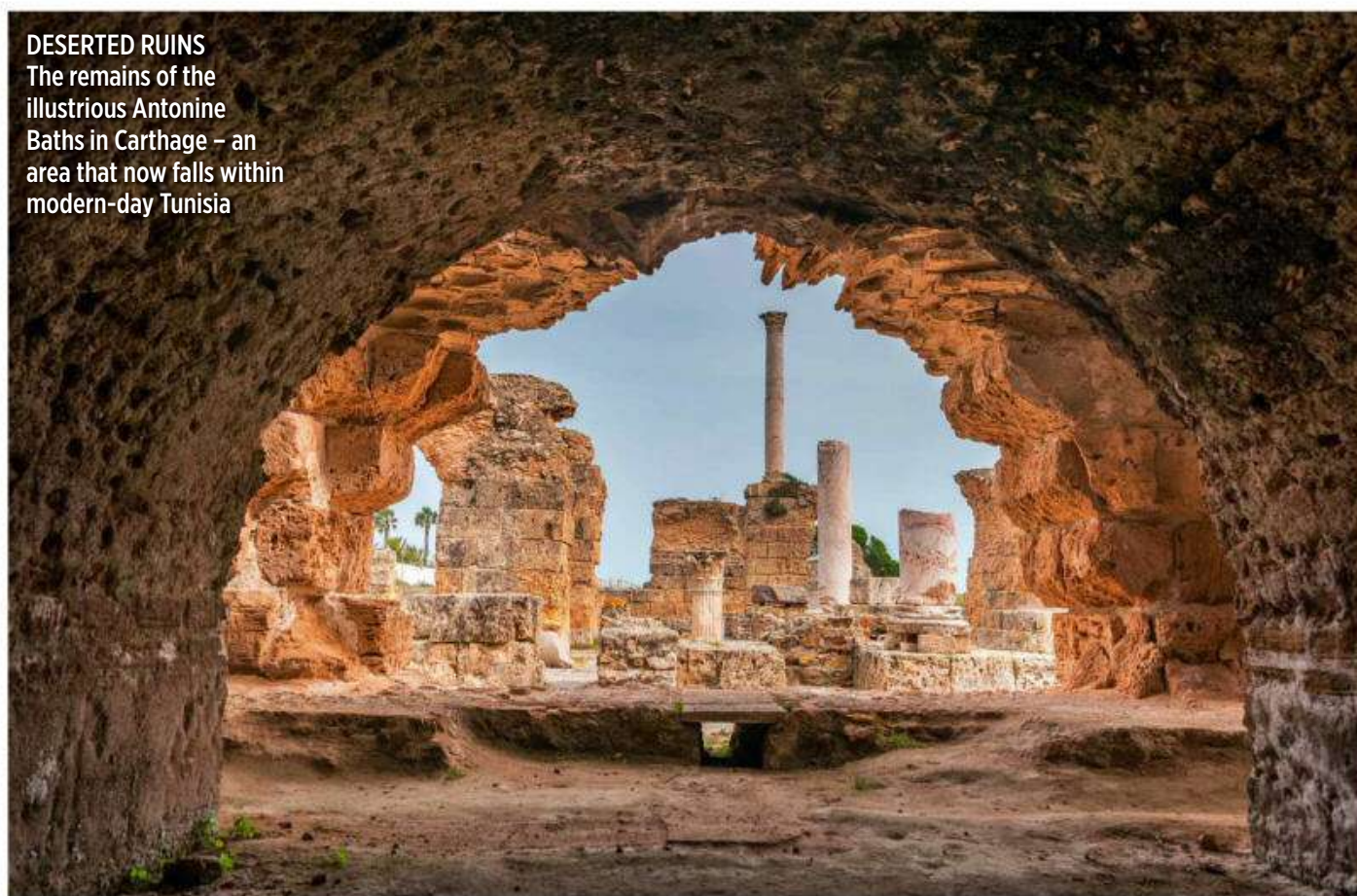
The heart was eventually returned to the church on 17 October 1945, the anniversary of Chopin’s death, where it was properly entombed in one of the pillars and became akin to a relic for music lovers.



MUSICAL ORGAN
Frédéric Chopin (above) was terrified of being buried alive, so he asked that his heart be cut out and buried separately (right) after his death – just to make sure



DESERTED RUINS
The remains of the illustrious Antonine Baths in Carthage – an area that now falls within modern-day Tunisia



What happened to Carthage?

SHORT ANSWER

The city went to war with Rome – not a good move, even with Hannibal's elephants

LONG ANSWER

Once a thriving and wealthy city state on Africa's north coast (modern day Tunisia), Carthage inevitably became a major enemy of the Romans across the Mediterranean. The civilisations waged a trio of wars during the third and second centuries BC called the Punic Wars – it was during the second that the Carthaginian general Hannibal did that whole thing with the elephants and the Alps – but Carthage's power and military eventually waned.

Carthage fell in 146 BC. The Roman senator Cato the Elder, fearing the city as a continuing thorn in Rome's side, declared “*Carthago delenda est*”,

or “Carthage must be destroyed”. And so it was: razed to the ground and its people sold into slavery. On the site, the Romans established a new settlement, which grew into the centre of administration for Roman Africa.

Rome became the dominant player in the Mediterranean. As for the city, it changed hands falling to the Vandals in the fifth century, the Byzantines in the sixth, and the Umayyad Caliphate at the end of the seventh. Muslim forces then held the fortress at Carthage until the 1270s when they ultimately decided to destroy its defences rather than let it fall to the rampaging crusaders.

DID YOU KNOW?

JAMES NO. TWO

After his defeat at the battle of the Boyne in 1690, James VII of Scotland and II of England and Ireland was dubbed *Séamas an Chaca*. In Irish, it means ‘James the shit’. Clearly, his supporters weren't happy with him fleeing the battlefield.

KEEN AS MUSTARD

Royal households and monasteries across medieval Europe would often hire an official known as a *mustardarius*, whose sole responsibility was to manage the growth and preparation of – you guessed it – mustard.

POMPEII POOCHES

Among the extraordinary finds at Pompeii are mosaics at the entrances to houses depicting dogs. At the House of the Tragic Poet, the preserved pooch is accompanied with the words, *Cave Canem*: ‘beware of dog’.

OH MY DAYS

In 1899, a couple from Kent, Thomas and Alice Day, surely condemned their new-born son to future mocking when they decided to name him ‘Time Of’.



Has the US ever had an emperor?

SHORT ANSWER

While not as famous as Washington, Jefferson or Lincoln, Joshua Norton did claim to rule the US

LONG ANSWER

Tucked away in the history of the United States is an imperial footnote in the shape of Joshua Abraham Norton. In 1859, the English born resident of San Francisco proclaimed himself as Norton I, Emperor of the United States, in letters sent to multiple newspapers. One publication printed it as a joke, and so began his 20 year reign.

Norton issued a number of decrees – including the questionable decision to dissolve the US in 1860 and the almost prophetic building of a suspension bridge to connect San Francisco with Oakland in 1872. Far from dismissing Norton as a madman, the people of San Francisco enjoyed having an emperor, who they often saw in a blue uniform with gold epaulettes and a beaver hat with a peacock feather. When he died in 1880, some 10,000 people turned out for the funeral.



EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

Joshua Norton took to wearing elaborate military attire while out and about in San Francisco

What is the Popol Vuh?

SHORT ANSWER

A Mayan manuscript that has revealed incredible secrets

LONG ANSWER

The *Popol Vuh* is a sacred narrative of the K'iche' people, who were part of the Mayan civilisation in modern-day Guatemala. It chronicles the creation of the world, including the deeds of the ‘hero twins’ Hunahpu and Xbalanque (depicted above); the origins of humans; and the histories of the K'iche'. Such stories had been passed down by oral tradition before being written in the 16th century. It was a Spanish Dominican friar named Francisco Ximenez who ensured their survival for posterity when he discovered the *Popol Vuh* in the early 18th century and transcribed the K'iche' text alongside a Spanish translation.



SONGS OF PRAISE
Some of Kassiani's hymns are still sung today – more than a thousand years after the composer's death

250,000

The approximate number of cows needed to produce the hydrogen bags for a World War I Zeppelin. Germany had to ban sausage making to ensure enough cows' guts were available.

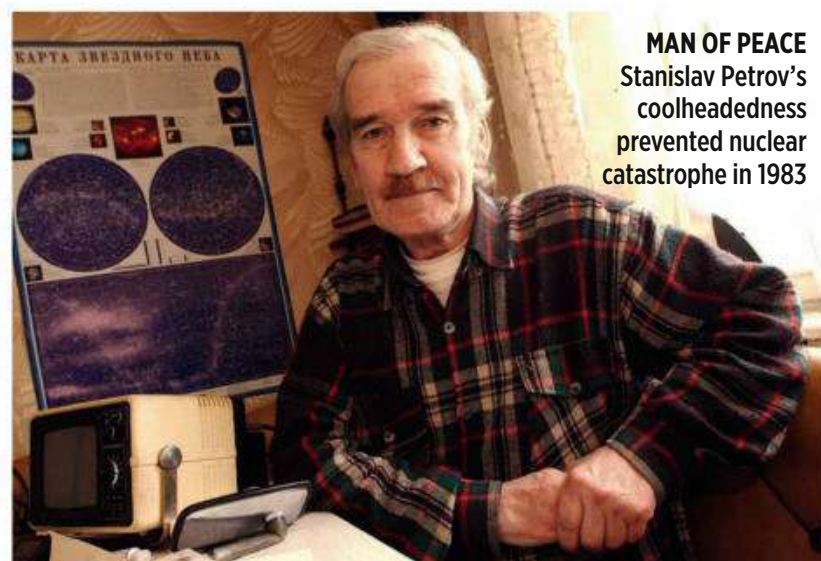
Who was the “man who saved the world”?

SHORT ANSWER

As nuclear war between the Soviets and Americans seemed inevitable, one man kept his head

LONG ANSWER

In the early hours of 26 September 1983, the Soviet Union's nuclear attack early warning system lit up with the alert that the United States had launched a missile. This was followed by another four, all streaking towards the Soviet Union. Cold War tensions were high at the time and any attack would undoubtedly have led to retaliation, plunging the world into nuclear war. Except, the Soviet duty officer, Stanislav Petrov, did not report the missiles, against his strict training and protocols. He believed the alert was a false alarm. Rightly, it turned out, as the computer had mistaken the Sun's reflections on cloud formations as enemy missiles. Who knows how many millions of deaths were prevented by Petrov, dubbed the “man who saved the world”?



MAN OF PEACE
Stanislav Petrov's coolheadedness prevented nuclear catastrophe in 1983

Who is the earliest-known female composer?

SHORT ANSWER

A ninth-century Byzantine abbess showed her religious devotion through her haunting music

LONG ANSWER

Not only do we know the name of the ninth-century maestro Kassiani, also called Kassia, but we can still play her compositions. More than 20 of her pieces survive, maybe more if their provenance could be ascertained properly, as well as a couple of hundred of her verses and epigrams. Some of her hymns are still in use in the Eastern Orthodox Church to this day, such as the ‘Hymn of Kassia’, which is sung every Holy Wednesday.

Born into a wealthy family, Kassiani was put forward as a possible bride for the Byzantine emperor Theophilos. Instead, she became a nun, founded a convent and served as abbess. That her music and poetry has survived more than a millennium is highly unusual in itself; the fact that the work of a woman, so regularly overlooked or credited to someone else, managed to endure all that time is truly remarkable.

When was the jukebox invented?

SHORT ANSWER

In 1889, although it looked more like a silent disco than the type of jukebox used by the Fonz

LONG ANSWER

The classic image of the jukebox is more likely to evoke the postwar period, a time of 1950s diners filled with greased-haired youngsters listening to Elvis, rather than the 1880s. Yet that was when the technology first span into life. On 23 November 1889, the former telegraph operator Louis Glass and his partner, William Arnold, installed their invention at the Palais Royale Saloon in San Francisco: an altered Thomas Edison phonograph inside an oak

cabinet with a coin slot. Four listeners at a time used the stethoscope-looking tubes hanging from the box as headphones.

It wasn't called a jukebox – that term was popularised in the 1940s – but a ‘nickel-in-the-slot phonograph’. The music, thankfully, was catchier than the name as Glass and Arnold soon installed more of their contraptions in other saloons. In fact, it was claimed their machines earned more than \$4,000 within a year. That's a lot of nickels.



AN EVOLVING SOUND

Music lovers gather around an early jukebox in Kansas, c1890 (above) – a rather different-looking device to those typically found in bars today (right)



FOLLOW THE LEADER
A painting depicts George II (centre) during the 1743 battle of Dettingen – the last time a reigning British monarch would lead troops in combat



Which British monarch was the last to lead an army?

SHORT ANSWER

This was something of an occupational hazard for a king, until George II

LONG ANSWER

James IV of Scotland holds the unwanted honour as the last monarch of the British Isles to die in battle, cut down at Flodden in 1513. He wasn't the last to uphold the royal tradition of leading troops into the fray, however; it's just that the others lived to tell the tale. More than 200 years later, George II was at the head of an allied force at the battle of Dettingen.

His so-called Pragmatic Army made of British, Hanoverian and Austrian troops was in Germany to fight the French. Confused? That's the War of the Austrian Succession for you. The battle on 27 June

1743 didn't start well for George when his horse got spooked by musket fire, but he rallied and was commended for spurring on his troops to victory.

While Handel composed a ditty called 'Dettingen Te Deum' to celebrate the deeds of his patron, the battle did little to affect the war and failed to ensure George was seen as a strong, no nonsense ruler since, two years later, Bonnie Prince Charlie attempted to overthrow him in his Jacobite rebellion. Since George II, though, British monarchs have taken their safety more seriously and left war to the soldiers.

How old is the crossbow?

SHORT ANSWER

Bow meets gun in this more than 2,000-year-old weapon

LONG ANSWER

While the true origins of the deadly, bolt firing crossbow are lost, it is clear that the weapon was being developed during the first millennium BC. And in two places. In China, archaeological findings from around the fifth century BC include cast bronze locks and bolts, and the crossbow is mentioned in writings such as Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. Meanwhile, the ancient Greeks had made their own version called the *gastrophetes*. The crossbow proved so powerful that it continued to be used for centuries – even after guns were making a blast in the world of modern warfare.



LATERAL BOW
Crossbows, such as this example found in Sweden's Royal Armoury, were used in battle for more than a millennium



How effective were V2s?

SHORT ANSWER

As a weapon to win the war? Not at all.
To spread fear among civilians? Devastating

LONG ANSWER

The *Vergeltungswaffen-2* (Vengeance Weapon 2) was a ballistic missile developed as a desperate attempt to swing the momentum of World War II in favour of Germany. Designed by scientists led by Wernher von Braun, around 3,000 rockets were fired from September 1944 to March 1945.

While too inaccurate to be a strategic weapon, its effectiveness was in the psychological impact. The supersonic V2 was unseen, unpredictable and unstoppable. The estimates on how many were killed vary from around 5,000 to 9,000. While still tragic, this was nothing like the 43,500 deaths caused by the Blitz.

The V2 did little to change the course of the war, but had a lasting legacy as the forerunner of the missiles that proliferated in the nuclear age and the space rockets that launched the Space Race.

SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS

facebook.com/HistoryExtra
twitter.com/HistoryExtra
@HistoryExtra

MORE Q&A ONLINE
Visit historyextra.com for more astounding history mysteries.

Try 3 issues for £5*

Subscribe to *BBC History Magazine* and explore the historical background to the world of today

Subscribe
to Britain's
bestselling
history
magazine



GETTY IMAGES

Your special introductory offer:

- Receive your first **3 issues for only £5**
- **Risk free trial offer** – you may cancel your subscription at any time.
- **Free UK delivery** direct to your door, at no extra charge!
- **Never miss an issue** of Britain's best-selling history magazine

* 3 issues for £5 is available for UK residents paying by Direct Debit only. After your first 3 issues, your subscription will continue at £24.99 every 6 issues, saving 30% off the shop price. If you cancel your subscription within 2 weeks of receiving your 2nd issue, you will pay no more than £5. Your subscription will start with the next available issue. Offer ends 31 December 2022.

+ UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances if offered by your phone tariff. Outside of free call packages calls charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open 9am–5pm weekdays. Overseas readers call +44 1604 973 723

EASY WAYS TO ORDER



ORDER ONLINE

www.buysubscriptions.com/HTHA22



BY PHONE

03330 162 115+

PLEASE QUOTE HTHA22

TV, FILM & RADIO

THE LATEST DOCUMENTARIES, BLOCKBUSTERS AND PERIOD DRAMAS

ONE
TO
WATCH

A staged propaganda photograph shows a German soldier launching a stick grenade at an 'enemy' during Operation Barbarossa. Hitler's troubled campaign on the eastern front forms the subject of a new BBC Two documentary series



The long road to defeat

Rise of the Nazis: The Eastern Front

BBC Two, February

In June 1940, Adolf Hitler, not a man renowned for taking foreign jaunts, travelled secretly to Paris. It was the briefest of visits, but he made time to pay homage at the tomb of Napoleon Bonaparte. It's a moment that has subsequently come to seem rich in significance as the Nazi leader became determined to achieve a military victory that eluded Napoleon: the defeat and conquest of Russia.

A year later, in June 1941, the Nazis launched Operation Barbarossa. It was the biggest land invasion in history and saw more than three million German soldiers cross the border. Within just a few days, the Germans were within 400 miles of Moscow. Had the Germans pushed on to destroy the Soviet forces defending the city, the course of World War II might have been very different.

Instead, with Hitler ignoring the advice of Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch, a man who had worries over the wisdom of facing enemies on two fronts, the German military failed to press home its advantage. Arguably, the subsequent course of the war was set as the Red Army, under the brilliant leadership of Georgy Zhukov, defended the Soviet capital as winter drew in.

It's a story laid out in this three part documentary that explores how Hitler's obsession with glory and the conquest of eastern *Lebensraum* ('living space') would ultimately contribute to the downfall of his genocidal regime.



The three-part series features dramatic reconstructions of real events, with actors portraying Hitler and the Nazi leadership

As with the previous *Rise of the Nazis* (2019), which charted how the party seized power in the 1930s, this isn't just the story of what the Nazis did, it also details opposition to the regime, which at moments came tantalisingly close to ousting Hitler – although ironically, one reading of events in July 1944, when Hitler survived an assassination attempt, is that it actually helped strengthen the deluded dictator's grip on power by convincing him he was invincible.

GETTY IMAGES XI, 72 FILMS/LUKAS SALINA XI

RIGHT: The National Theatre's 1980 production of *The Romans in Britain*, by Howard Brenton, outraged the social conservative activist Mary Whitehouse

BELOW: The Bayeux Tapestry, the creation of which forms the subject of a new BBC Radio 4 documentary, is an embroidery rather than a true tapestry



The filth and the fury

Archive on 4: Disgusted Mary Whitehouse / BBC Radio 4, Saturday 5 March

Socially conservative, devoutly Christian and implacable, Mary Whitehouse (1910–2001), the founder and first president of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, was a formidable figure. In 1982, her war of attrition against what she saw as "filth" in the media took a personal turn when she pursued a private prosecution for gross indecency against Michael Bogdanov (1938–2017), the director of the National Theatre's production of *The Romans in Britain*, a play that featured a depiction of male rape.

Marking the 40th anniversary of the case, Samira Ahmed looks back at Whitehouse's campaigning, a subject that seems timely in an era of culture wars, and debates over such subjects as social media regulation. We're told to expect a twist in the tale.



Hidden messages

Women in Stitches: The Making of the Bayeux Tapestry / BBC Radio 4, Tuesday 22 February

Seen from afar, the 70-metre-long Bayeux Tapestry is a magnificent piece of propaganda, one in the eye for the Saxons. Likely commissioned by William the Conqueror's half-brother, Bishop Odo of Bayeux, the artwork (which is technically an embroidery) tells the story of events leading up to the Norman victory over Harold Godwinson in 1066.

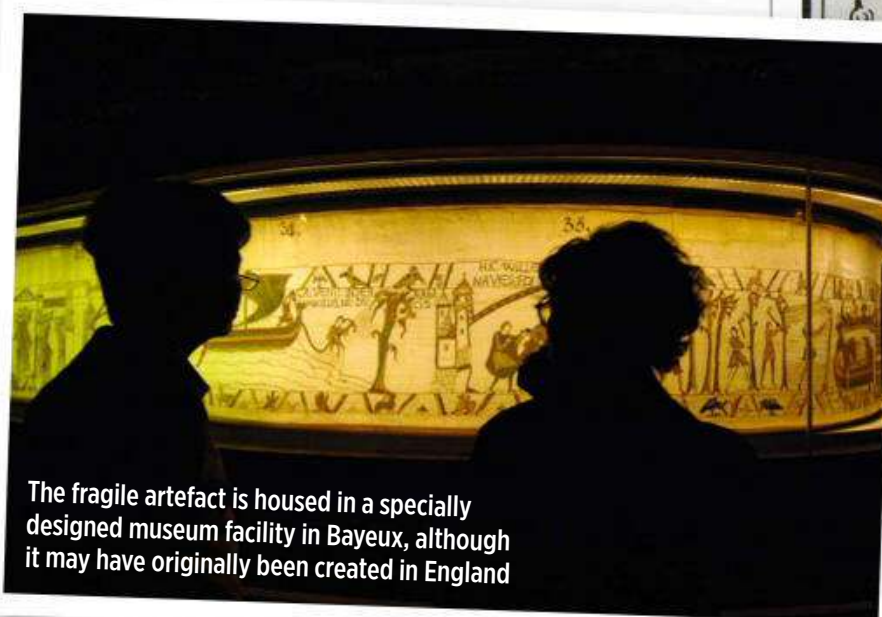
But look closer and the tapestry isn't quite what it seems. In the margins, there are figures and scenes that, like the kinds of images also seen in medieval manuscripts, seem to undercut the main action. Why is this? One reason may be that, in the 11th century, the English were leaders in the art of embroidery, and it's likely the tapestry was embroidered by Anglo-Saxon ladies, women who would have had no reason to welcome the invasion.

This was an idea first encountered by playwright Abigail Youngman in a newspaper article, and which helped to inspire her 2019 comedy drama for BBC Radio 4, *Bayeux*, starring Katy Brand and still available to stream online via BBC Sounds.

She's now returned to the subject for this documentary, which finds Youngman speaking with leading historians and Bayeux experts

in a bid to find out more about the lives of Anglo-Saxon women in this era. In part, it's a story of how little we know about the specific details of their lives, simply because the story of the creation of the tapestry has been largely lost in time.

Nevertheless, look at the images in the margins and we can imagine the women's camaraderie, humour and, considering the violence of some of the imagery, their fears.



The fragile artefact is housed in a specially designed museum facility in Bayeux, although it may have originally been created in England

The exploits of 17th-century witchfinders serves as the inspiration for a new BBC Two comedy series





Norse tales

Vikings: Valhalla / Netflix, streaming from Friday 25 February

First broadcast in 2013, *Vikings* was a series that happily for its producers arrived just as the notion of binge-watching television via streaming services entered the mainstream. Initially inspired by the sagas of Norse hero Ragnar Lodbrok, it told a convoluted story of adventure and derring-do, and built an international audience over six seasons.

It was therefore probably inevitable that a sequel would be commissioned, and Netflix has duly done the honours with *Vikings: Valhalla*, a series set in the early 11th century, 100 years after its predecessor.

The lead character this time around is Leif Eriksson (Sam Corlett), a real-life figure believed to have lived between c970 and c1020, and a key figure in Icelandic sagas. His fame was in great part down to his exploits as an explorer, and Eriksson may have even been the first European to set foot on continental North America, or Vinland as the Vikings called it.

Other characters in the new series include Freydis Eriksdotter (Frida Gustavsson), Eriksson's sister, strong-willed and fiery. The series also follows the machinations of a young prince, Harald Sigurdsson (Leo Suter), who later ruled Norway for 20 years but always looked to expand his territory.

There's a certain mixing up of the timeline for dramatic purposes here, but the first season begins with Norsemen gathering to plot revenge after an atrocity is committed in England.

The Netflix revival of *Vikings* stars Sam Corlett (below, centre) as explorer Leif Eriksson, and Frida Gustavsson (right) as his sister, Freydis



Magical thinking

The Witchfinder / BBC Two, Tuesday 1 March

It's 1647, a year when the Scots handed over King Charles I to the English Parliament in return for £40,000 in army back-pay. Within two years, the monarch would be executed in Whitehall. These were nervy, dangerous times, when all the kingdoms of the British Isles experienced conflict and when religious extremism flourished.

The febrile atmosphere allowed some strange notions to bubble to the surface. It's no coincidence that witch-hunting flourished at this time, in particular in East Anglia, where self-appointed Witchfinder General Matthew Hopkins is believed to have been **responsible for the executions of more than 100 women.**

This may not seem the most obvious historical backdrop for a comedy, but that hasn't put off Neil and Rob Gibbons, the writers and directors of *This Time with Alan Partridge*. So it is that the duo's new sitcom stars stand-up Tim Key as a failing, pompous and chauvinistic witchfinder, a man who badly needs an upturn in his fortunes.

He hopes this may arrive from delivering a suspected witch to trial. But his charge is an inquisitive, loud and uncouth woman (*This Country* co-creator Daisy May Cooper, pictured left), who is determined to turn the duo's journey across East Anglia into an ordeal for her captor.



Meltdown in the east

Chernobyl '86 / Sky Documentaries, February



The meltdown at Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant (pictured) was the most serious nuclear accident ever

to befall the world, a disaster that spread radioactive fallout across both Soviet states and western Europe. Even today, the land around the site is too dangerous for anyone to live there.

But what really happened at Chernobyl in April 1986? This new documentary, directed by Emmy winning filmmaker James Jones, draws on recently discovered archive footage and interviews with those who were there as it revisits the story of the catastrophe.

EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS

WHAT TO SEE AND WHERE TO VISIT IN THE WIDER WORLD OF HISTORY



EXHIBITION

Kyōsai: The Israel Goldman Collection

PAID ENTRY Royal Academy of Arts, 19 March – 19 June, royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/kyosai

More than 130 years after his death, Kawanabe Kyōsai (1831–89) is regarded as one of the greatest Japanese artists of all time. His vibrant work, which has influenced everything from tattoo designs to modern day *manga*, is by turns both terrifying and endearing, casting a satirical eye over Japan and its people during the late 19th century.

Thanks to a collaboration with the art dealer Israel Goldman, the Royal Academy will be exhibiting around 80 of Kyōsai's works together for the first time, including woodcut prints, illustrated books and *sekiga* 'spontaneous paintings' the artist often created while under the influence of saké.

As they navigate the display, visitors will also be able to learn about the artist's

beginnings as a child prodigy, such as his tutelage under Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1798–1861), as well as the wider context in which he operated; an age in which Japan was starting to embrace American and European culture.

Other highlights on show include a pair of intricately painted folding screens, *Night Procession of One Hundred Demons* (1871–89), plus examples of sexually explicit images known as *shunga*, which were usually produced in front of a live audience during raucous parties. Additional, related works will be exhibited in the genre of 'paintings within paintings', a concept that Kyōsai revisited on numerous occasions.

Tickets to the exhibition are priced £17 each for adults and should ideally be booked online in advance.

ABOVE: Kyōsai's *Beauty in Front of King Enma's Mirror* (1871–89)

RIGHT: Animals are a prominent feature of the artist's paintings, often shown undertaking human activities



**MUST
SEE**



Operation Black Door will be staged inside the rooms at the heart of Churchill's World War II operations

EVENT

Operation Black Door

PAID ENTRY Churchill War Rooms, London, 10–12 March, iwm.org.uk/events

Have you ever wondered how you would have fared as a World War II spy? Well, you can now try your hand at 1940s style espionage thanks to a new immersive experience hosted by Imperial War Museums and theatre company Wet Picnic. Inspired by the stories of real people who worked inside the Churchill War Rooms the prime minister's underground headquarters in Whitehall the live action game allows attendees to choose from one of five missions, working to gather intelligence, crack codes and eavesdrop on top secret conversations.

Tickets to Operation Black Door are priced £35 each, and on sale to players aged 18 and above. The wearing of 1940s dress is also strongly encouraged, if you want to truly add some more authenticity to the experience.



EXHIBITION

Titanic: Honour & Glory

PAID ENTRY The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, 19 February – 1 May, www.stokemuseums.org.uk/pmagg

RMS *Titanic* is one of the most famous ships to have ever existed. Already a record breaking behemoth at the time of its construction, the ship's 1912 maiden voyage would end up securing its name in the history books albeit for tragic reasons.

This major new exhibition in Stoke on Trent tells the dramatic story of *Titanic* from slipway to seabed, featuring original artefacts from the ocean liner and even a selection of props from James Cameron's 1997 blockbuster of the same name.



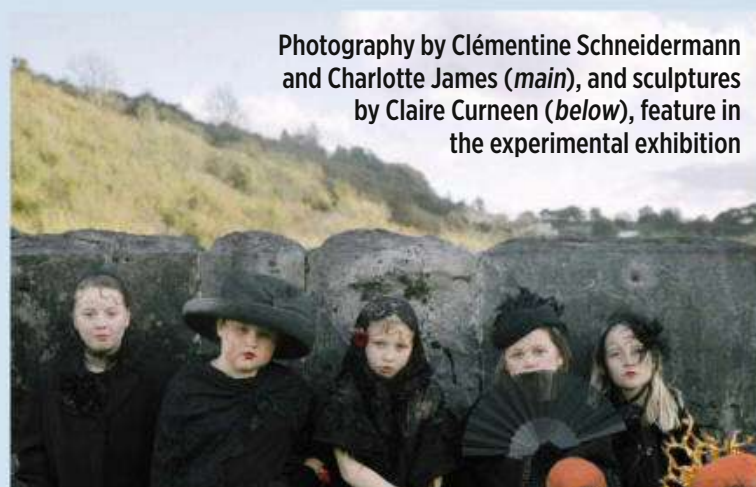
The display also examines the Staffordshire connections of some of the people who perished, including Captain Edward John Smith and senior fourth engineer Leonard Hodgkinson.

More than 1,500 perished on board the *Titanic* after it hit an iceberg in the Atlantic

EXHIBITION

The Rules of Art?

FREE ENTRY National Museum Cardiff, until April 2023, museum.wales/cardiff



Photography by Clémentine Schneidermann and Charlotte James (main), and sculptures by Claire Curneen (below), feature in the experimental exhibition

What does art tell us about identity, representation and the world in which we live today? These are just some of the big questions posed by a new exhibition at National Museum Cardiff, which mixes old and new items from its collections to ponder the so called 'rules' of art.

As they make their way around the gallery, visitors are treated to more than 500 years of drawing, painting and sculpture, including works by luminaries such as Rembrandt, Picasso and Rachel Whiteread. There's also a chance to see John Akomfrah's stunning video installation *Vertigo Sea*, which utilises archive footage from around the globe to explore our relationship with the ocean.



ONLINE TALK

The 1920s: Radical Fashion

PAID ENTRY The National Archives (online), 30 March, nationalarchives.gov.uk/20s-people/whats-on

The 'Roaring Twenties' were a time of profound change across the west. After the shock of World War I had subsided, many nations experienced an economic boom, which would prove to have a transformative effect on people's spending habits including the clothes they chose to buy.

To mark the release of the 1921 Census of England and Wales, dress historian Amber Butchart (pictured) will be giving an online talk for The National Archives, exploring the styles that defined the decade. Crucially, the lecture will also reveal the **Impact of Hollywood**, and how fashion became a way for **women to express** themselves.

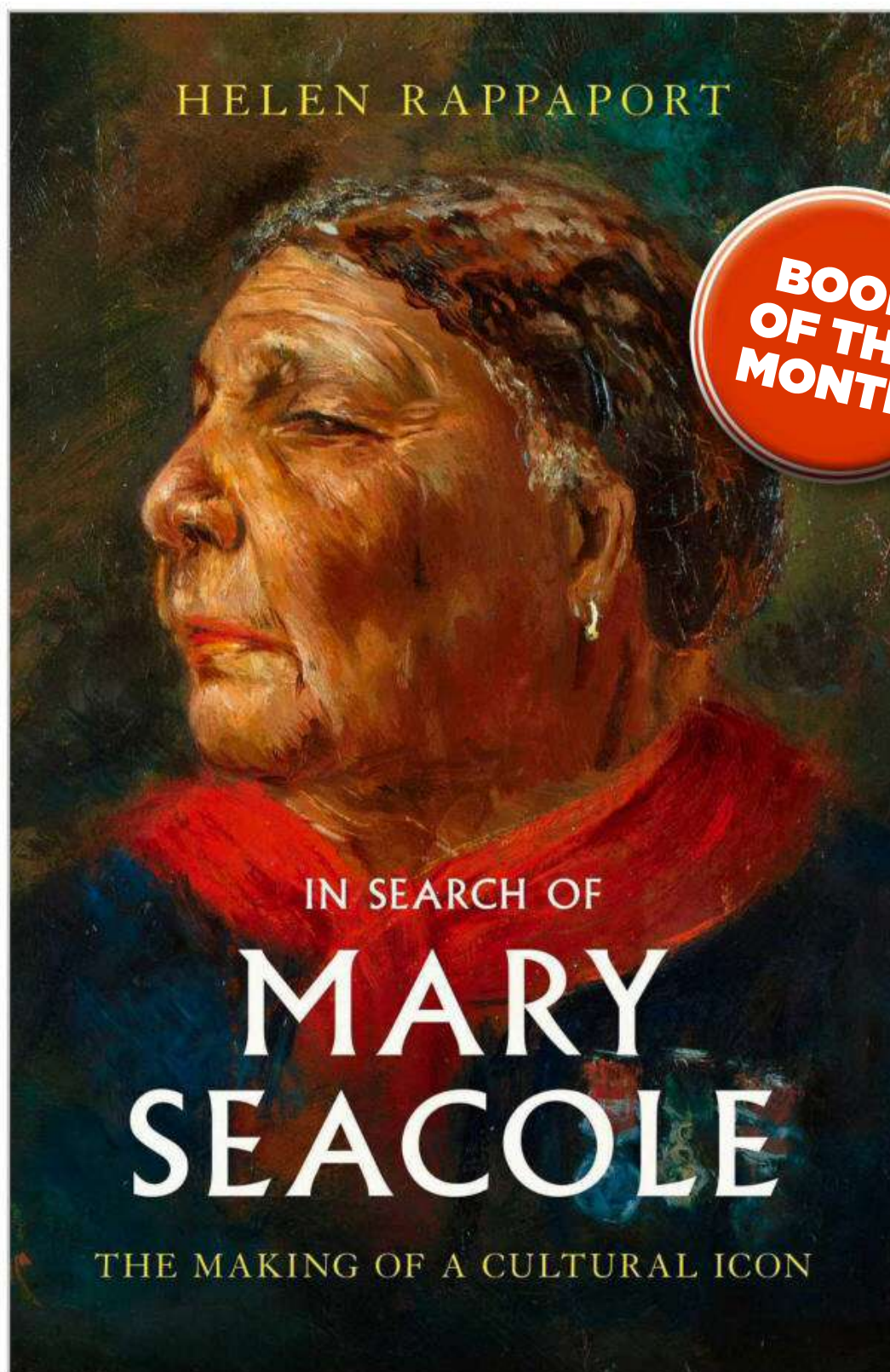
To buy tickets and find out how to watch the talk, **visit the link above.**



Amber Butchart will explore the shifts that influenced the styles of the 1920s

BOOKS & PODCASTS

THIS MONTH'S BEST HISTORICAL READS AND LISTENS



In Search of Mary Seacole: The Making of a Cultural Icon

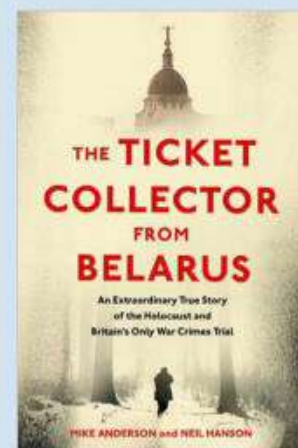
By Helen Rappaport
Simon & Schuster, £20, hardback, 416 pages

The exploits of British Jamaican nurse Mary Seacole during the Crimean War of the 1850s were much lauded – indeed, as author Helen Rappaport notes, they made her the most famous black woman in the British empire. Yet, thanks to a carefully controlled publicity campaign and the fact that her work was subsequently overlooked for decades, surprisingly little is definitively known about Seacole's life. This lively new biography aims to put that right, and to reveal the real woman behind a Victorian celebrity.

The Ticket Collector from Belarus: An Extraordinary True Story of Britain's Only War Crimes Trial

By Mike Anderson and Neil Hanson
Simon & Schuster, £20, hardback, 384 pages

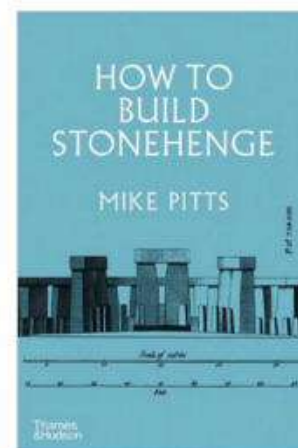
In 1999, Anthony Sawoniuk – a Nazi collaborator from Belarus who moved to England after World War II, where he worked as, among other things, a ticket collector for British Rail – became the only person in British history to be successfully tried for war crimes. This book charts his story, explores the extent of his crimes, and chronicles the remarkable set of circumstances that led to a childhood friend taking to the dock as principal witness for the prosecution.

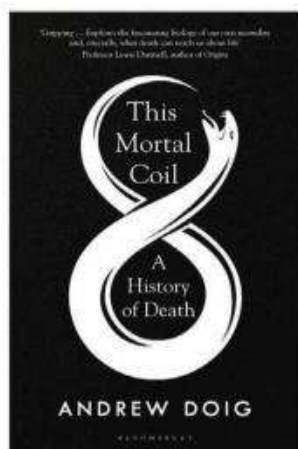


How to Build Stonehenge

By Mike Pitts
Thames and Hudson, £20, hardback, 256 pages

Thousands of years after its construction, Stonehenge retains its ability to captivate and mystify in equal measure. Archaeologist and author Mike Pitts here tackles some of the foundational questions about the prehistoric monument: who built it, and why? How did they manage to create something so enormous with such apparently limited technology? And what new clues can we learn by using the latest scientific techniques? This is an engaging, eye-opening account from a leading expert in the field.





This Mortal Coil: A History of Death

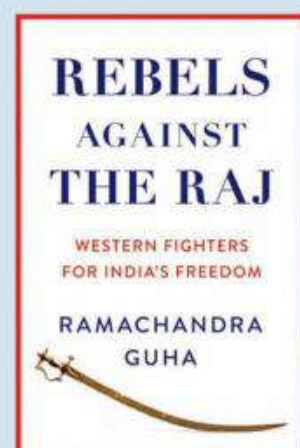
By Andrew Doig
Bloomsbury, £25, hardback, 384 pages

If there's one thing that unites the human experience, it's death. Yet across the course of centuries, transformations in the ways in which we live have similarly reshaped why, and how, we die. From reductions in famine and violence to increases in non-communicable diseases such as cancer, this fascinating, big picture history traces the key trends while never losing sight of the human stories at their heart. Ending on an optimistic note for the future, this is by turns grim and uplifting reading.

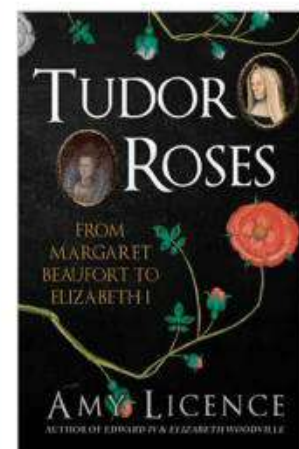
Rebels Against the Raj: Western Fighters for India's Freedom

By Ramachandra Guha
William Collins, £25, hardback, 496 pages

Telling the stories of seven British and American people who joined India's long fight for independence between 1893 and 1947, this book from leading expert Ramachandra Guha acts as both a series of intimate character studies and a sweeping, big picture history. These men and women were to be forever changed by their relationship with the subcontinent and



their passionate involvement in fields as diverse as education, politics and religion was to have a lasting impact on India and its place in the world.



Tudor Roses: From Margaret Beaufort to Elizabeth I

By Amy Licence
Amberley, £25, hardback, 448 pages

If it's a stretch to say that the Tudor era was a woman's world, it's also true that the dynasty was full of powerful, fascinating women who made a significant mark. This welcome corrective to male-dominated histories of the period offers interconnected biographies of notable individuals from Elizabeth Woodville and Margaret Beaufort to half-sisters Mary I and Elizabeth I, and explores the myriad ways in which they guided their society out of the medieval and into the modern.



WHAT TO LISTEN TO...

Each month we bring you three of our favourite podcasts from the BBC and HistoryExtra



Evil Genius with Russell Kane: Cecil Rhodes

bbc.in/3FZxmqJ

Look beyond its provocative title and this BBC podcast series aims to reconsider established truths about history's 'heroes' and 'villains'. This episode focuses on a man who has been much in the news recently: Victorian politician Cecil Rhodes, whose imperialism and supremacist views have sparked calls to remove statues erected in his honour.



In Our Time: The Gold Standard

bbc.in/3r4pVKw

We've heard much in recent weeks about rising inflation and the impact it could have on the cost of living, but concerns about economic instability are nothing new. In this episode of the long-running series, Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss the 'gold standard', an effort to increase financial security and global trade in the late 19th century.

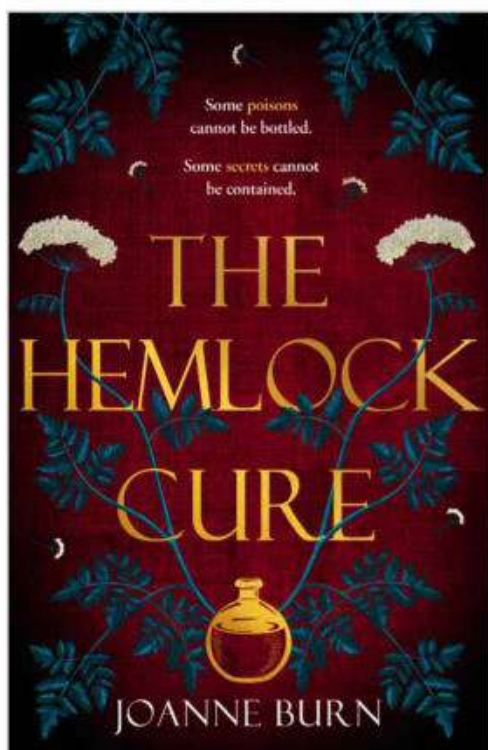


Everything You Wanted to Know: The 1920s

bit.ly/HistoryExtra1920s

From the debauchery of the Jazz Age, immortalised in F Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*, to the devastation wrought by the Wall Street Crash, the 1920s is often regarded as a decade of extremes. In this instalment of our series tackling listener queries, Sarah Churchwell considers whether that view is really accurate.

HISTORICAL FICTION...



The Hemlock Cure

By Joanne Burn

Sphere, £14.99, hardback, 336 pages

Based on the real story of Eyam in the Peak District which went into self isolation to prevent the spread of the 1665-66 plague outbreak, Joanne Burn's second novel brings the lives of the village's women to the fore. As the killer disease engulfs the country, they are each consumed by secrets that threaten to destroy their lives – from the village midwife, Isabel, whose work with herbs and remedies is starting to arouse suspicions of witchcraft, to Mae, who harbours a hidden love and studies from her father's forbidden books. When Mae makes a terrible discovery, she and Isabel must form a bond if they are to survive...

.... Excerpt

*The plague has arrived in Eyam
and news of it is spreading...*

Early autumn 1665.

All through the village, they ask the same question: "Have you heard?"

It is how Isabel greets Elizabeth on entering the stillroom. But Elizabeth looks blank.

"The Hadfields' journeyman, George Viccars, is dead. They buried him today, and Catherine Mompesson said he died from the plague."

Elizabeth's hand goes to her throat; Catherine is the rector's wife: a reliable source.

"It can't be true," says Elizabeth nonetheless.

"Mary Hadfield confessed it."

"So you think them certain?"

Isabel considers the question. They are certain, but it seems too awful to say it. All day her insides have been churning, and she steadies herself against the table as her mind flits from Mary Hadfield's two young sons, both still in their nursery gowns, to her own youngest sons who are still in theirs: not yet breeched, not yet studying their letters, concerned only with mischief and hiding in her coats and what tasty goodness will come from the oven next. She can hardly countenance the notion of her small sons falling ill – of any of her children falling ill, and she includes Mae and Rafe in that number.

Q&A Joanne Burn



Joanne Burn is an author and writing coach. Born in Northampton, she now lives in the Peak District. Her debut novel, *Petals and Stones*, was published in 2018.

What inspired you to write this novel?

House hunting in 2008, I viewed a cottage for sale in Eyam that had belonged to Humphrey Merrill: the village herbalist during the 1665-66 plague outbreak. I could easily imagine his 17th-century kitchen full of herbs and dried flowers, the shelves lined with jars of fascinating and bizarre ingredients. I knew it would be the perfect setting for a novel.

How did living near to Eyam help your writing?

Fortunately, *The Hemlock Cure* was written before the Covid-19 pandemic, so I spent plenty of time in Eyam – in the church, the graveyard, the museum and walking in the surrounding countryside. On several occasions, I went to Cucklet Delf, where the villagers in 1666 decided to hold church services: out in the open air, with plenty of space for social distancing.

This is your first historical novel: how did you take on the challenge of setting a novel in the past?

I had to bring the 1600s to life in my own mind before I could write a single sentence. I read about material culture and everyday living. I researched medicine and humoral theory, stillrooms and midwifery, religious conflict and the Civil Wars. I visited the Eyam village museum and spoke to the volunteers there. Reading 17th-century texts, novels and journals was especially helpful; they gave me a feel for the language and sensibilities of the time. I tried to stay immersed in the era and didn't read a modern-day novel for over a year. I enjoyed some time with a medical herbalist who took me on foraging walks as the seasons changed, showing me the edible and medicinal plants that the villagers of Eyam would have searched for in their fields.

Did anything surprise you in your research?

I found it interesting that even wealthy women used herbs for making medicines and household products; we have this idea that herbal remedies were the preserve of impoverished 'wise women'. I was also surprised to discover that a 17th-century rural English village dealt with contagion similarly to now – social distancing, isolating when ill, and avoiding crowded indoor spaces where the 'foul miasma' could pass from person to person.

Are there any other periods you'd like to write about?

I'm currently writing a novel set on the Dorset coast in 1824. The research so far has been fascinating: all fossils, labourer-riots, shipbuilding and smuggling.

CROSSWORD

TEST YOURSELF WITH OUR HISTORICAL PUZZLE EVERY ISSUE

CROSSWORD NO. 105

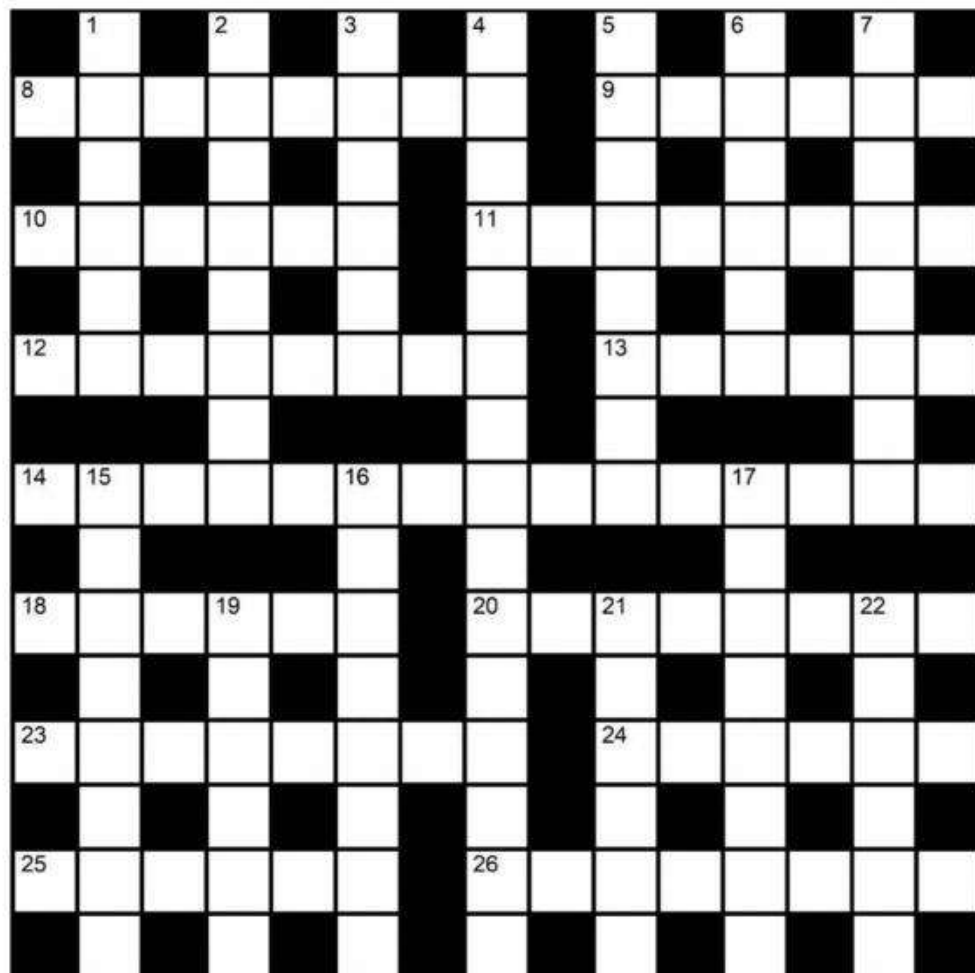
Test your history knowledge to solve our prize puzzle
– and you could win a fantastic new DVD

ACROSS

- 8** See 4 Down
9 1887 play by Anton Chekhov (6)
10 Type of field artillery (6)
11 Fabled city of gold in the New World (2,6)
12 Simon ____ (b1963), poet laureate (8)
13 Don ____ (1937–2021), half of a country/rock'n'roll duo (6)
14 19th-century belief in the god-given mission of the US (8,7)
18 'Get Me to the ____ on Time' – song by Lerner and Loewe (6)
20 Military airfields (3,5)
23 Joseph ____ (1778–1837), English clown (8)
24 ____ Sturluson (1179–1241), Icelandic poet and statesman (6)
25 ____ Prince Charlie, traditional name for Charles Edward Stuart (1720–88) (6)
26 City struck by an atomic bomb on 9 August 1945 (8)

DOWN

- 1** Sexual or political scandal (6)
2 City of southern Italy (8)
3 Country ruled by Idi Amin from 1971 to 1979 (6)
4/8 Incidents in Bohemian history, occurring in 1419, 1483 and 1618 (15,2,6)
5 Clarence ____ (1886–1956), frozen-food pioneer (8)
6 Temperance campaigner Nation or actress Fisher, perhaps (6)
7 Duluth-born musician (b1941) (3,5)
15 Michael ____ (b1968), England cricket captain from 1993 to 1998 (8)
16 King of England from AD 978 to AD 1013 (8)
17 1785 poem by Robert Burns (2,1,5)
19 City on the Adriatic, founded by the Romans in 268 BC (6)
21 "Few die and none ____" – paraphrase of an 1801 letter by Thomas Jefferson (6)
22 Celebrated exclamation of Archimedes (6)



Set by Richard Smyth

CHANCE TO WIN



DVD
WORTH
£24.99
FOR THREE
WINNERS

Britannia: series three

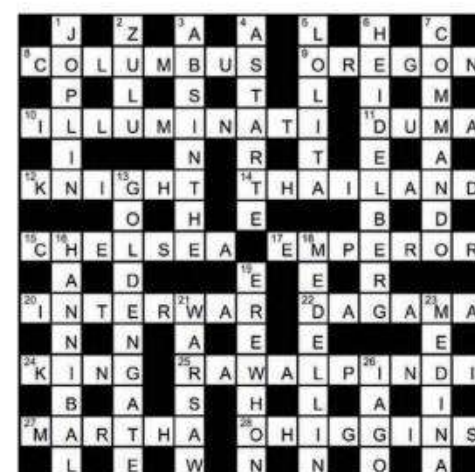
Starring David Morrissey and
Sophie Okonedo

HOW TO ENTER

Post entries to **BBC History Revealed, March 2022 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester, LE94 0AA** or email them to **march2022@historyrevealedcomps.co.uk** by noon on **25 March 2022**.

By entering, participants agree to be bound by the terms and conditions shown in the box below. Immediate Media Co Ltd, publishers of *BBC History Revealed*, would love to keep you informed by post or telephone of special offers and promotions from the Immediate Media Co Group. Please write 'Do Not Contact IMC' if you prefer not to receive such information by post or phone. If you would like to receive this information by email, please write your email address on the entry. You may unsubscribe from receiving these messages at any time. For more about the Immediate Privacy Policy, see the box below. Branded BBC titles are licensed from or published jointly with BBC Studios (the commercial arm of the BBC). Please tick here ☐ if you'd like to receive regular newsletters, special offers and promotions from BBC Studios by email. Your information will be handled in accordance with the BBC Studios privacy policy: bbcstudios.com/privacy

SOLUTION N° 103



CROSSWORD COMPETITION TERMS & CONDITIONS

The competition is open to all UK residents (inc. Channel Islands), aged 18 or over, except Immediate Media Co London Ltd employees or contractors, and anyone connected with the competition or their direct family members. By entering, participants agree to be bound by these terms and conditions and that their name and county may be released if they win. Only one entry per person.

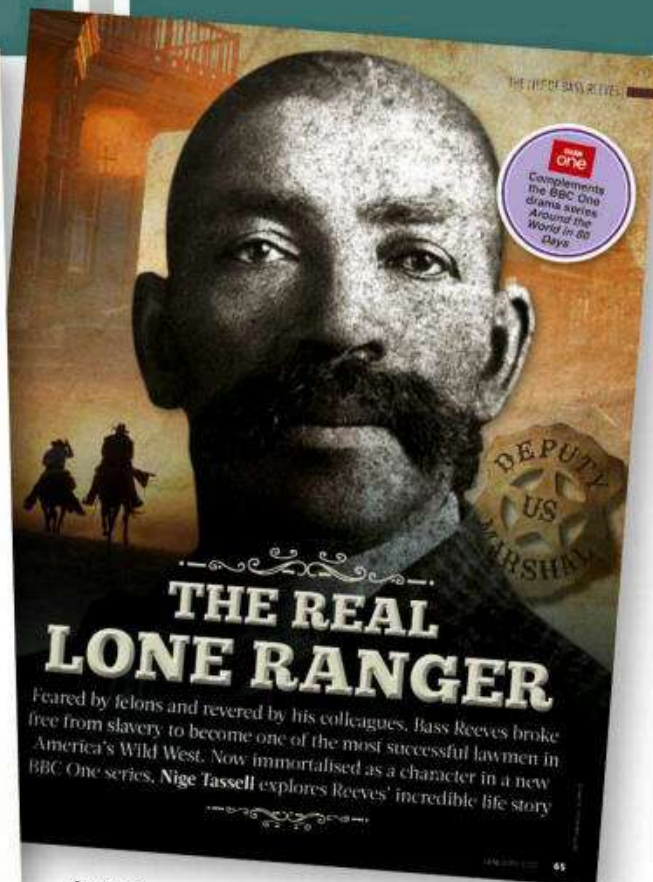
The closing date and time is as shown under **How to Enter**, above. Entries received after that will not be considered. Entries cannot be returned. Entrants must supply full name, address and daytime phone number. Immediate Media Company (publishers of *BBC History Revealed*) will only ever use personal details for the purposes of administering this competition, and will not publish them or provide them to anyone without permission. Read more about the Immediate Privacy Policy at www.immediatemediacompany.co.uk/privacy-policy. The winning entrants will be the first correct entries

drawn at random after the closing time. The prize and number of winners will be as shown on the Crossword page. There is no cash alternative and the prize will not be transferable. Immediate Media Company London Limited's decision is final and no correspondence relating to the competition will be entered into. The winners will be notified by post within 28 days of the close of the competition. The name and county of residence of the winners will be published in the magazine within two months of the closing date. If the winner is unable to be contacted within one

month of the closing date, Immediate Media Company London Limited reserves the right to offer the prize to a runner-up.

Immediate Media Company London Limited reserves the right to amend these terms and conditions or to cancel, alter or amend the promotion at any stage, if deemed necessary in its opinion, or if circumstances arise outside of its control. The promotion is subject to the laws of England. Promoter: Immediate Media Company London Limited

LETTERS



ABOVE: Our recent article on US lawman Bass Reeves prompted reader Ian MacDonald to suggest that history's 'real' Lone Ranger was actually a Texan named Captain John R Hughes

LEFT: Hughes inspired the novel *The Lone Star Ranger*, which was adapted for the big screen four times, including an effort starring John Kimbrough

THE REAL LONE RANGER?

I very much enjoyed Nige Tassell's engrossing article on American lawman Bass Reeves (January 2022). There is, however, someone else who may have a claim to be the inspiration for the iconic Lone Ranger character.

In 1914, Zane Grey wrote a novel, *The Lone Star Ranger*, which he dedicated to real life Texas Ranger Captain John R Hughes, a work that was adapted into four different films between 1919 and 1942.

Hughes worked as a cowboy, lived with the Choctaw and Osage peoples, and was a trail driver and farmer before serving as a Texas ranger from 1887 to 1915. He was recruited after famously pursuing a gang of horse thieves for over a year before bringing them to justice.

Hughes then successfully tracked down the killers of fellow ranger Captain Frank Jones, and brought to book 18 bandits involved in the crime. Working mainly along the Mexican border as a captain and then senior captain with the rangers, he gained a reputation as a dogged pursuer of outlaws.

After his retirement, Hughes became a member of the Texas Rangers Hall of Fame and a national celebrity, having received more

honours than any other ranger before or since. A number of books were written about him and he himself believed he was the model for the *Lone Ranger* stories which first appeared in 1933 and ran to over 3,000 radio and 221 television episodes.

Ian MacDonald, Essex

PIRATICAL PLEASURE

I've just purchased your December 2021 issue, featuring the Essential Guide to the Golden Age of Piracy. I love it, as I am a fan of the movie franchise *Pirates of the Caribbean*. I look forward to reading many other interesting historical stories from your amazing and educational magazine!

Jane, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

A SPEEDY DELIVERY

I enjoyed your recent piece on the Terracotta Warriors (In a Nutshell, February 2022). I have seen the warriors myself, and after visiting them, my friends and I were taken to a place that made replica warriors for tourists to purchase and have shipped home.

We were told there that the terracotta archers would have been armed with repeating crossbows (see diagram, right). This unique

design featured a number of arrows in a box: when the lever was pushed forward, the string was caught in a notch at the back of this box. As the lever was pulled back the string was also pulled, and an arrow would drop out of the box and onto a groove on the stock (the wooden centre of the crossbow).

Finally, when the string was pulled back to its fullest extent, a pillar on the stock would push the string out of its notch so that it travelled down a slot in the box and shot the arrow. This system must have given a rapid speed of arrow shooting like no other crossbow since.

John Grove, by email

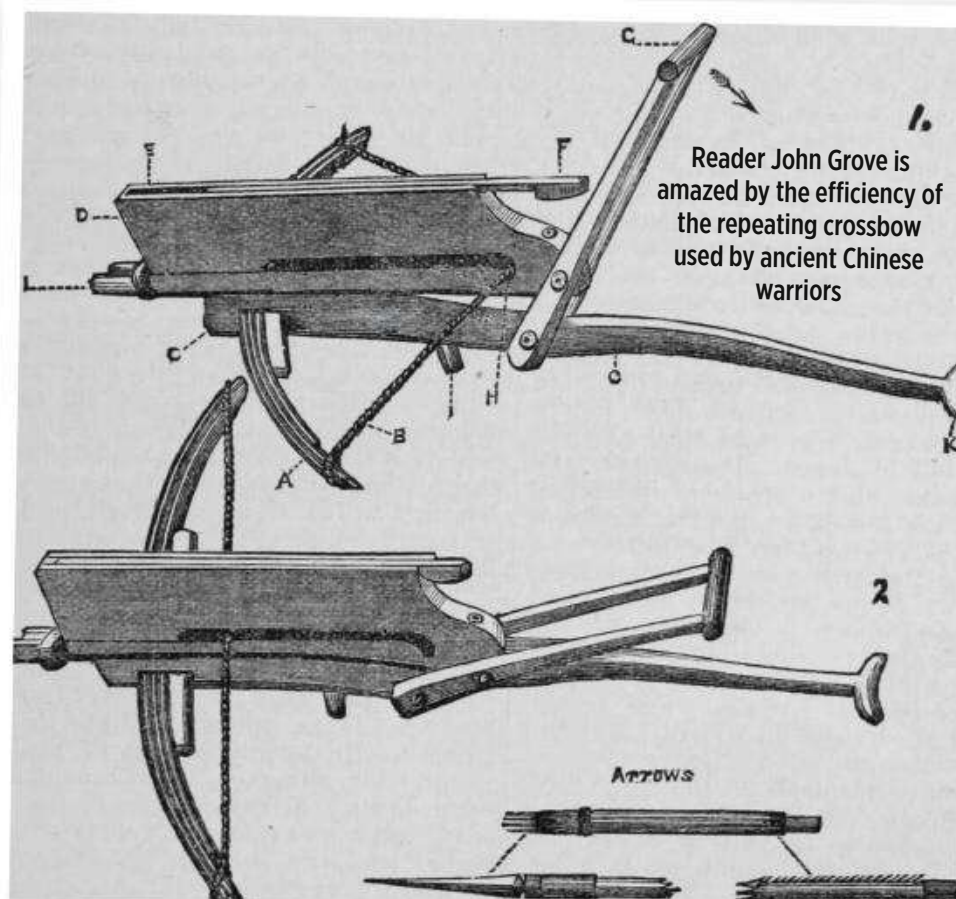


PHOTO FINISH

ARRESTING IMAGES FROM THE ANNALS OF THE PAST



TROTSKY ARRIVES IN MEXICO 1937

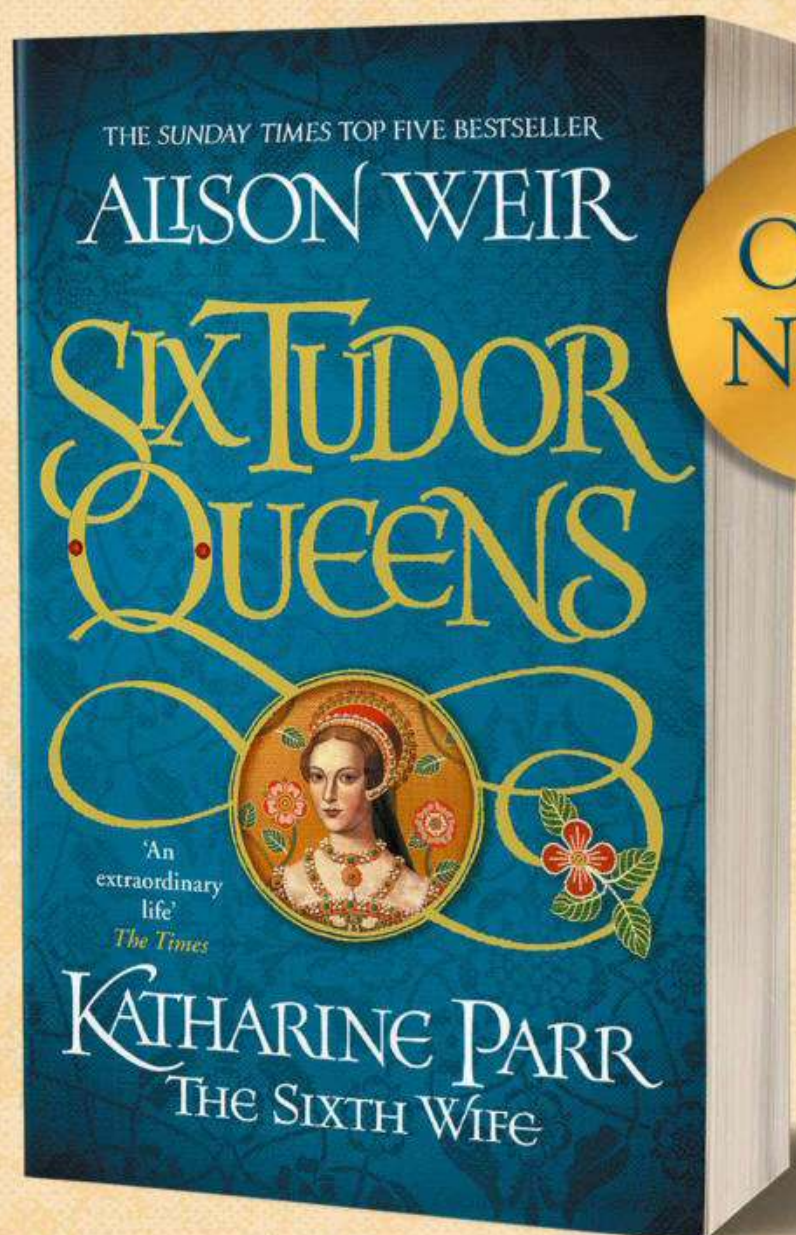
Former Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky (*centre*) arrives in Mexico with his wife Natalia by his side. Exiled from the Soviet Union in 1929, the couple had lived in Turkey, France and Norway before seeking asylum on the other side of the Atlantic. After taking up residence in Mexico City, the couple initially lived in the home of artist Frida Kahlo (*pictured on Natalia's right*), with whom Trotsky is reported to have had an affair. In 1940, Trotsky was brutally assassinated with an ice axe by a Spanish communist named Ramón Mercader, who was working under the orders of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin.

HISTORY TELLS US SHE SURVIVED.

THIS ENTHRALLING NOVEL
REVEALS HOW BOLDLY SHE LIVED.

‘A woman far ahead of her time: fiercely intelligent,
courageous, passionate and inspiring...’

Tracy Borman



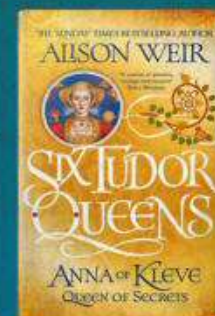
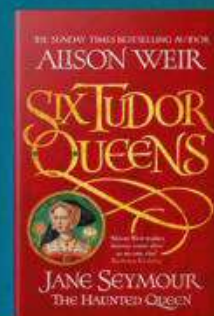
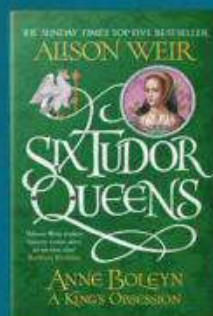
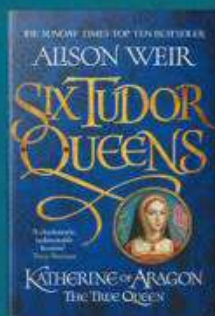
OUT
NOW

‘This series is a serious achievement’

The Times

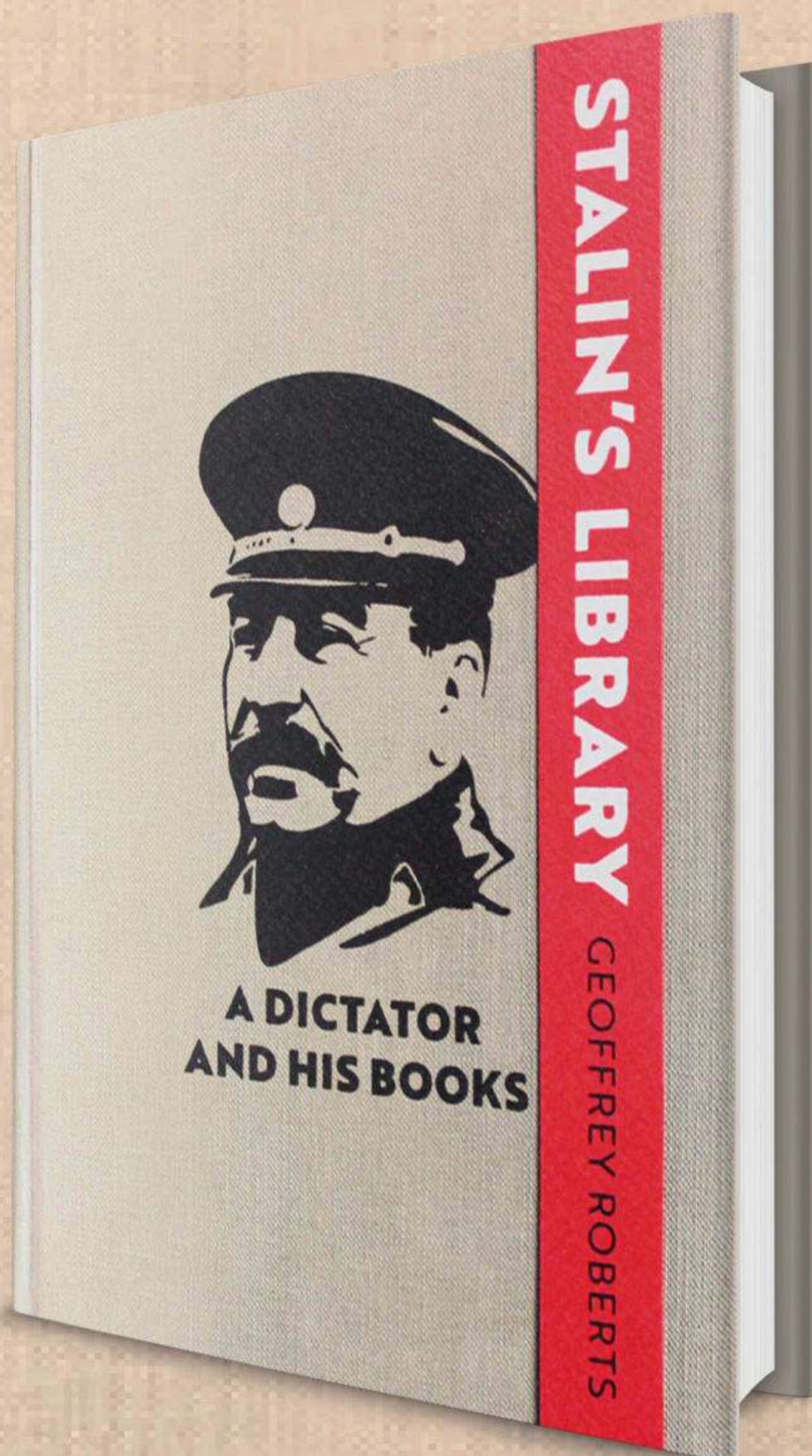


SIX TUDOR QUEENS
SIX NOVELS · SIX YEARS



**'A new and fascinating depth of insight
into the mind of a fanatic.'**

Rachel Polonsky,
author of *Molotov's Magic Lantern*



Available now from your local bookshop

Yale
University
Press